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**THE COVENANTER'S  
NARRATIVE AND PLEA.**

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# NARRATIVE AND PLEA.



THE  
COVENANTER'S  
NARRATIVE AND PLEA;

EXHIBITING

THE ERROR, SCHISM, RADICALISM, AND SLANDER

OF

DR. PAUL,

AND OTHER SEPARATISTS FROM THE REFORMED  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS HOUSTON,

KNOCKBRACKEN.

PART I.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."—1 *John* ii. 19.

"Turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And turn ye not aside; for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people."—1 *Sam.* xii. 20, 21, 22.

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MDCCCXLI.



## PREFACE.

WHEN introducing another pamphlet to public notice, it will not be considered out of place, briefly to refer to the circumstances which have called it forth, the materials which it contains, and the objects which it contemplates. The controversy respecting the magistrate's power, *circa sacra*, and other collateral subjects, which has agitated the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this country for a number of years, has been managed by the party that has recently separated from the Reformed Synod, by constant appeals to popular prejudice or passion. And by means of certain portions of the newspaper press, and latterly by numerous small, but virulent pamphlets, which have been pushed off in all directions, and among all kinds of society, valuable principle has been opposed, and character assailed and maligned. The writer of this pamphlet has been a principal butt of the assaults that were made upon the Covenanted Testimony, either by those who have withdrawn from the church, or by such as hailed their defection, and cheered them on in courses of innovation and declension. To those who have attended to the progress of the controversy, or who have looked into the publications to which we refer, it is unnecessary to point out the bitterness of these assaults, ascribing as they did to the object of them, almost every thing odious and abominable in sentiment, and every thing hateful in character and conduct.

The only defence of principle or character which the writer made from the press, in opposition to repeated attacks, was in the pamphlet entitled the "REVIEWER REVIEWED," which was published in the summer of 1833. Through respect to the decision of the Reformed Synod in that year, he has refrained, from that period till the present, to offer any vindication from the press; and he permitted innumerable perversions of his writings, and misrepresentations of his principles and conduct to pass without reply, rather than appear to keep alive with those who were brethren in the ministry, a controversy which was calculated to injure the church in public estimation, and which the Supreme Judiciary had earnestly desired to have terminated. Although, well aware that he was thus exposed to be condemned without a hearing at the bar of public opinion, and chiefly grieved at the injury which was done to important and precious truths, he would still have left his cause with Him who pleads for the oppressed, satisfied himself with contending against innovation in the courts of judicature, and persevered in withholding defences or replies from the press, had his opponents continued members of the Reformed Synod, or remained in the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The act of the Eastern Presbytery, in July, 1840, in declining the authority of the Synod, and relinquishing their standing in the Church, obviously changed the whole aspect of the case. Those who withdrew were no longer to be regarded

as brethren, bound together in the same Covenant, or amenable to the same ecclesiastical tribunal, which was to judge in relation to differences of sentiment or conduct. And when, in communication after communication, in the Newspapers, and in Pamphlet after Pamphlet, along with the writer, the Synod was held up to public abhorrence,—the principles of the Church's testimony were misrepresented and vilified,—the honoured names of the Reformers and Martyrs of Jesus were aspersed, and honest witnesses for the doctrines and approved practices of the Scottish Reformation were covered with reproach, silence appeared to be no longer a duty, and forbearance seemed to be no farther justifiable.

The separating party and their allies, turning to their purposes of delusion the pacific course pursued by their opponents, boasted that they were unable to answer. The writer has been repeatedly called upon by name in the public prints,—and when he did not respond to these rude invitations, or disorderly challenges, his cause has been pronounced indefensible, and adversaries, with abundant self-sufficiency, have shouted a triumph. In one of the numerous petty pamphlets of the Eastern Presbytery,—and this is only a specimen of such boasting as occurs frequently in publications from the same quarter,—it is said,—“They” (the Editors of the *Covenanter*) “are quite unable to defend their principles,—they have been driven from the press.—They have been driven from the platform,” (Communication, &c., p. 3.) On what grounds these assertions rest, they best can tell who made them. To speak in editorial style,—we have had uninterrupted possession of the periodical press, now for a period of nearly *Eleven Years*, to the no small grief or annoyance of those who dislike Covenanting principles, and love innovation; and we are neither yet frightened from our post, nor disposed to relinquish it to the abettors of error and disorder. And as for the “platform,” we have not yet tried it, and we could not therefore be driven from it. If the Separatists refer to the Synod, they themselves best know who have been “driven” from their position by the power of truth, after having found the strong and unequivocal sense of the Church against them.

But although the writer came to the resolution of defending principle and character, and the scriptural order of the sanctuary, from the time that the Eastern Presbytery broke the staff of bands, and separated from the Synod, he deferred for some time to enter again the arena of controversy. He was unwilling, by replying immediately to the *Declinature*, and other abusive pamphlets, to leave any ground for the allegation that he was widening the breach, or driving even adversaries to extreme courses; and it was not till after one vehement philippic after another had been launched against him and the Synod, that he began to digest the materials for a defence. Besides, a Committee had been appointed at the last meeting of Synod, to watch over the interests and protect the character of the church; and he waited for some time, in the expectation that they would defend, not him or his writings, for this he neither needed nor desired, but the testimony of the Church and the character of Synod, and repel the rude and reckless attacks that were made on both. The Committee, however, having emitted nothing of this kind, the writer was strengthened in the conviction, that it would be prejudicial to the cause of truth to withhold such statements and arguments as he had prepared, for placing the disputed topics in a proper light before the public, and for exhibiting the position of those



who have occupied the one side or the other of the controversy. A multiplicity of other important duties, and many consequent interruptions, prevented the publication of the pamphlet so soon as could have been wished; and this too, it is trusted, will be taken by candid readers as an apology for a few instances of defective arrangement, or repetition, which may be easily corrected.

The plan adopted, after mature consideration, is that of a connected narrative of proceedings from the commencement of the controversy till the present time, interspersed with such remarks, and such a defence of principle and order, as may tend to dispel prejudice and clear away misrepresentation. A historical detail seemed necessary for the members of the church, in order to judge of matters numerous and complicated, and of movements that extended through a period of ten or eleven years, and the effects of which may yet extend to a period much more lengthened. In submitting such a narrative to the church and to the public, the author cannot expect that the same facts, however strongly marked, will impress different minds in the same way,—and the conclusions deduced may, therefore, in some instances, be such as may not be clearly seen, or fully acquiesced in, even by those who have been concerned in the discussions that have agitated the Synod, and interested the community. This, however, he may be permitted to say;—according to the best of his judgment, he has stated nothing but fact, not having intentionally concealed or exaggerated any matter; and he has deduced no inference, and employed no argument under the impulse of feeling or prejudice, but with the earnest desire that the truth might be exhibited and defended, with its only appropriate weapons,—those of truth and righteousness.

That the terms employed in speaking of those who have abandoned their profession and vilified the Church, are always so smooth or respectful as could be desired in religious controversy, the writer will not pretend to allege. But when the language and spirit of opponents,—the ruthless character of their attacks,—and the manner of expression of any of their pamphlets that have been published since their separation, as for example the "*Declinature*,"—are duly considered,—this will plead our apology for speaking out bluntly. With those who have outraged the common decencies and courtesies of civilized society, in opposing the testimony for truth, and assailing character, it is difficult to manage a controversy, so as to avoid the appearance of asperity, or the use of terms that sound harshly. The writer can only say for himself, that it was far from his wish to requite others as they had done to him. While he considered it incumbent on him to characterise principles and proceedings plainly, he is conscious of no feeling towards those whom he believes to be in error, but that which would earnestly desire that they may be speedily convinced of the evil of their ways, and reclaimed from backsliding, and would rejoice in their welfare, in connexion with their acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

Well persuaded that the cause of a faithful testimony may not be expected to be popular, during the day of Antichrist's power, we can hardly expect that the community at large will accord a favourable hearing to this vindication, or that the timid within the church will approve of a defence which may seem to keep alive controversy. But we believe it will hereafter be found, as it has been in times past, that attacks upon any article of a Scriptural Standard, draw upon

other great principles; and those who hope to enjoy their ease, and are unconcerned about the afflictions of Joseph, may, ere long experience, amidst the present singular shakings of the churches, that *neutrality* is a course far from safety, and that to hold fast a scriptural profession without wavering, though occasionally exposing to the strife of tongues, and subjecting to other trials, is the true path to substantial comfort, honour, and felicity.

To the principles of civil and religious liberty, in the scriptural sense of the phrase, the writer is sincerely and ardently attached; and therefore he regards it as a duty to expose pretenders, who are at once the flatterers and favourites of slaves and despots, and to exhibit the proper foundation and security of men's rights and liberties, as laid in the recognition of God's rights, and in the purity, independence, and prosperity of the church of Christ. While, in some parts of this pamphlet, we have had occasion to point out the aid rendered to the cause of radicalism by some of the movements or writings of those who have declined the authority of Synod, we wish it to be distinctly understood, that we are unconnected with, and protest against, the political parties of the day, of whatever name, believing that none of them aim at a scriptural standard of government.

Our attitude is, that of defence. The history of past proceedings will show that we have all along stood on the defensive; and whatever other representations may be obtruded on the public, we can, in all good conscience declare, almost in the words of the venerable Dr. M'Crie, in reference to opposition to defection in his day,—“We have never taken any step which had the tendency to produce separation, but as we were compelled by some active procedure on the other side, some new measure importing innovation or imposition, which, if yielded unto, would have driven them, with the body to which they belonged, from the ground which they formerly occupied.”

The present is the first, and comparatively a small part of our defence against attacks which, if collected into one, would more than equal the size of this pamphlet. If spared and enabled, in Divine providence, as more pressing duties will permit, we shall continue the exposure of the sentiments, spirit, and conduct of those who have long discovered hostility to a faithful testimony, and embittered enmity to the Covenanted church. Our design is to vindicate truth,—disprove unfounded allegations, and exhibit the judicatories of the church entitled to confidence and submission in the Lord. Taking our stand by the Reformers, Martyrs, and Standards of the church, we entertain the hope, that we shall enjoy an interest in the prayers of many that have learned to weep for the desolations of Zion, and that these labours shall subserve the advancement of the best of causes. To the Reformed Presbyterian Church especially is this Narrative and Plea offered, as an humble attempt to vindicate the Supreme Judicatory, to defend truths for which the martyrs of Jesus contended unto blood, which have been handed down from pious parents to their children through succeeding generations, and for which, in the day of coming trials, the witnesses of Christ may yet be required to deliver a blood-sealed testimony.



# NARRATIVE AND PLEA,

&c.

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## PART I.

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DIVISIONS in the Church of Christ are always to be lamented. However her glorious Head may overrule them for good, there can be no doubt that they originate in the evil principles of the human heart, and that the great enemy employs them, as a grand means of perpetuating his empire of darkness, and of obstructing the progress of truth throughout the earth. Among the most unpleasant circumstances connected with the controversies that issue in separation in the church, may be mentioned, the alienation of spirit engendered among those who were bound together in the same brotherly covenant; and the unscrupulous use of the same weapons as the world employs to vilify the character of the witnesses of Christ, and assail the testimony which they hold.

In the history of past controversies in the church, it will generally be found, that those who make defection from received principles and order, have had recourse to vituperation and calumny against such as adhere steadfastly to the standard which both were pledged to maintain inviolate. They labour to conceal their departure from principle by dealing in negatives, without committing themselves to any full or clear statement of their views; and it is found to be a more convenient method of damaging a good cause, to excite odium against those who advocate it, than to oppose directly the great truths which it embraces. Thus acted the Arians in the early ages of Christianity,—thus did the Remonstrants of the seventeenth century conduct the warfare against those who held the doctrines of grace;—and it were easy to adduce numerous instances of the same spirit, from controversies that have in recent days agitated the church, and from the conduct of those who have been ambitious of the honour of being leaders in division.

The truth requires no such weapons in its defence. “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” The “strange fire” of human passion or prejudice can never be accepted on God’s altar. Towards misguided brethren we desire to entertain feelings of compassion, while we may be called strongly to condemn their divisive courses, and the painful necessity is laid upon us of exposing their disingenuity, errors, treachery to their former profession, and bitter hostility to faithful men, whether of a former or later period. If in defending truth, and obeying a divine injunction,

—"we rebuke them sharply," we will endeavour to cherish an earnest desire that those whose measures and sentiments we condemn, may be restored to soundness in the faith, and led to the acknowledgment of the truth from which they have grievously departed.

While it were easy to trace the opposition to certain principles of the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this country to their remote causes, and to show that a leaven had been working for a number of years, which had a natural tendency to produce results such as have taken place,\* we confine ourselves to the consideration of such matters as have been subjects of public notoriety, or of ecclesiastical procedure. For satisfaction, we shall, first of all, present a historical statement of the late controversy in the Reformed Synod, from its commencement till the time when some ministers and others openly raised the standard of rebellion and seceded from the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This sketch must of necessity be condensed;—but we shall aim to state facts, setting down "nought in malice," and concealing nothing that is of importance to a proper understanding of the various matters in dispute.

#### SECTION I.

*Measures for originating a Periodical.—Commencement of the 'Covenanter.'—Hostility to the Editor by the Eastern Presbytery.*

In the year 1830, the Reformed Synod, at its Annual meeting, held in Coleraine, being favoured with the presence of Delegates from the sister Synods in Scotland and America,† adopted various measures for the advancement of truth and godliness. Among these was the proposal to commence a Periodical, to be devoted to the edification of the church, in the illustration and vindication of the great principles of her profession. The Synod's resolution respecting it ran in these terms:—

\* This ungodly leaven, which continues to corrupt principle and deteriorate practice, may, in a great measure, be said to have been working, at least since the political disturbances of 1798. About that time, and soon after, a number of individuals entered the membership of the church, distinguished by little else than their hatred of the British Government. It is worthy of special observation, that Dr. Paul's late controversial writings, and his efforts to injure the character of Synod, and to thrust out a Covenanting Testimony, have been eagerly hailed by this class of persons, and by those who, whether within the church or not, approve of the anti-covenanting views of the United Irishmen. The influence of the confederation to which we have alluded upon the membership of the church, together with the brow-beating and tyranny that ministers of the Eastern Presbytery exercised for a number of years in Synod, by which some of its members were either forced to refrain from attending its meetings, or were intimidated by a knot of violent men, ready simultaneously to bear down any man who expressed opinions different from their own;—with some instances in which Dr. Paul, in preaching and otherwise, many years ago, propounded his lax views, though guardedly, may be more fully noticed in a future pamphlet, for which copious materials are at hand.

† These were Rev. William (now Dr.) Symington, and Rev. Dr. McLeod of New York.



" Moved and agreed,—That the Synod, regarding themselves called upon, by the state of the churches, to take measures for a more open maintenance and advocacy, and for a wider extension of the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, and regarding the public press as a powerful instrument, which may be rendered subservient to the high advancement of the cause of truth, recommend to such of its members as may be able to give attention to the matter, to make arrangements for the publication of a periodical, to be circulated throughout the bounds of our religious community; and the members hold themselves engaged to use endeavours in order to obtain sufficient support for the undertaking from the several congregations."\*

This unanimous agreement placed the matter on the footing on which it could alone stand with propriety. It pledged no Synodical responsibility, either for the mode of conducting the proposed periodical, or for the sentiments which it might contain; but simply declared that the commencement of such a work was desirable,—left it with any of its members to set it on foot,—and offered a general recommendation to the people to encourage the undertaking. The motion was brought forward in Synod by Mr. Thomas Houston, who had previously consulted with several esteemed brethren in the ministry, concerning the necessity and importance of such a measure, and it was seconded by Dr. M'Leod, who warmly approved of the object.

A considerable period was suffered to pass, after the meeting of Synod, without any farther steps being taken towards the commencement of the proposed periodical. The motion respecting it was made in Synod, with no desire on the part of the mover to assume precedence of any of his brethren; but solely with the earnest wish to see a work originated that might be of extensive and lasting benefit to the church. Believing that there were many others better qualified than himself for conducting a Periodical, he would gladly have hailed the announcement that any father or brother in the ministry had taken steps for accomplishing the Synod's design, and he would cheerfully have furthered, to his utmost ability, the undertaking. After waiting for more than *three months*, he printed and circulated a prospectus of a periodical which had received the approbation of some fathers and brethren in the ministry, chiefly with the view of ascertaining whether the church would furnish sufficient encouragement to a work, which proposed to assign a prominent place to the elucidation and defence of Reformation principles.

It speedily appeared that the church took a deep interest in the proposal. In a few weeks, upwards of *fifteen hundred* subscribers were obtained, on the ground, of course, that the magazine should be conducted on the principles announced in the prospectus, and various letters of encouragement were received from brethren in the ministry, and from public spirited individuals throughout the church. So far as is known to the writer, the design was hailed with satisfaction by the whole Covenanting community in this country, with the sole exception of Dr. Paul, and some of his friends of the

Eastern Presbytery, and perhaps a very few others with whom he had influence in other quarters. Even they at first manifested no special apathy or hostility to the undertaking, however they were afterwards led, through Dr. Paul's misrepresentations, to oppose it. Whether from the desire to foster a delusion that he alone in the Synod could write any thing worthy of publication, or that he thought a work in which the distinctive principles of our Testimony would be exhibited, must contrast unfavourably with his writings, in which nothing whatever of this kind had been displayed, or from a spirit which need not now be characterised towards those who were most active in the commencement of the periodical, a systematic and ungenerous opposition was set on foot in the infancy of the undertaking, which has been persevered in with increasing virulence for nearly eleven years. Even before departing from the place of the Synod's meeting, Dr. Paul, in the presence of a number of ministers and elders, scoffed at the proposal of a periodical,—he and some of his friends afterwards did not subscribe,—and, when the prospectus was issued, he went about, by petty criticisms, to depreciate it,—talked of the attempt mis-carrying, and did every thing in his power, by low gossip, and mean artifice, to smother the design in its birth.

At a meeting of ministers held in Belfast, for consultation, which had been convened by the author of the prospectus, on too short a notice, and at a season which was unfavourable for the attendance of distant brethren who were friendly to the design, Dr. Paul and his friends residing in or near the place of meeting attended in a body, and their conduct on the occasion plainly evinced that their object was to secure the entire control over a work, which it now appeared would be supported by the church, and which they had hitherto endeavoured but in vain to oppose and strangle. Here the party acted in the most unbrotherly manner, and precluded all prospect of conducting the periodical with harmony or satisfaction. Dr. Paul repeatedly insulted the writer, gave him the lie direct, though he offered to produce documentary evidence fully confirmatory of the statement which he had made,—depreciated all his past exertions in behalf of the work,—read a paper of captious criticisms on the prospectus, *proposed to publish a new one*,—and throughout seemed to have no other object in view, than to secure the entire management of the magazine for himself and his friends, and, by every means in his power, to oppress and degrade one whose only fault was an anxious desire, in accordance with the resolution of the supreme judicatory, to see a valuable undertaking commenced, and an overweening concern to obtain the friendly co-operation of all the members of Synod, in carrying it forward. In this course of rude and waspish conduct, Dr. Paul was countenanced either by the silence of his friends, or by their joining with him in insult and evil surmisings. Such treatment was entirely unmerited, but not wholly unexpected. Mr. Houston was obviously under no obligation to convene the meeting, and had clearly the right to originate and conduct the periodical on his own responsibility. His wish in convening brethren, previously to commencing the work, was to act in a friendly spirit towards all the members of Synod, and to secure, if possible,



their co-operation. But surely it would have been utterly unreasonable to expect that he would surrender, all at once, his interest in a concern which he had planned, and by a laborious correspondence originated, and in the extensive patronage and support which the church had freely accorded to him. Few persons, either within the church or without it, would have entertained such an expectation, or would have taken such a course to realize it, save Dr. Paul and his associates of the Eastern Presbytery.

Though the only two persons present, who had, from the first, taken any interest in projecting the periodical, reluctantly consented to certain arrangements at this meeting, it was altogether apparent that the prospect was most forbidding of being able to conduct any undertaking, which would require frequent consultation and friendly conference, with brethren who could wantonly outrage feeling, and thus early discover that their darling object was not co-operation in a good work, but unlimited control in a matter in which, of proper right, they had no just interest whatever. A statement, too, made at the close of the meeting, by Dr. Paul, in which his friends appeared to acquiesce, respecting the character of the work contemplated, excited at the time considerable alarm. Dr. Paul delivered a caution about bringing forward in the periodical certain peculiar principles, alleging that there was a difference of opinion respecting them; and when reminded that there could be no difference among genuine Covenanters on such articles, as they had received them as defined in the Act and Testimony, and other standards, he said we might differ about the definition itself. This appeared too like a design to keep back the distinguishing principles of the church, or to dilute them to please those who disrelish and oppose them; and when viewed in connexion with statements in Dr. Paul's then last pamphlet, it tended to awaken a just suspicion, that a periodical in the hands of such men could only prove treacherous to the cause which it was proposed to advocate. When the members were about to retire, and the clerk read over the arrangements that had been agreed upon, Dr. Paul proposed, and of course, succeeded, his friends being a majority, to make a certain alteration, which tended to bring the periodical still farther under their exclusive management. He and his party were repeatedly warned that the course which they were pursuing, would have the effect of breaking up the agreement, and marring altogether the prospect of future harmony; nevertheless, presuming upon their numbers, and trusting to sheer effrontery to carry the point, they persisted in it to the last, without manifesting the slightest regard to the feelings, or character, or rights of their young brother.

From this specimen of harsh and intolerable treatment, and such a declaration of loose views in relation to the testimony, it appeared completely evident that nothing like harmony or good feeling could be expected, in acting with Dr. Paul and his friends. As the design of the publication could not be honourably abandoned,—proposals having been issued, and a large number of subscribers having been obtained, it was judged to be the only course in which the publication could be issued, with the least prospect of punctuality and comfort, and of a faithful exhibition of Reformation.

mation principles, to dispense at once with the co-operation of men who had evinced nothing but a malignant and intolerant spirit. Accordingly, soon after the meeting, \* Dr. Paul and his friends were informed that their aid in the management would be dispensed with,—while, at the same time, their contributions were solicited, and the offer was frankly tendered to them of similar co-operation, in case they should commence a periodical of their own. In several pamphlets and speeches, Dr. Paul and his friends have endeavoured to produce an unfavourable impression against the Editor of the *Covenanter*, for dissolving a Committee, which, as they allege, had the only right of managing the publication,—and the impression in some instances among their friends seemed to be that the Synod had appointed such a Committee. It is sufficient to reply to these allegations, that by means of a majority at the meeting, the enemies of the periodical had secured to themselves a control in its direction, to which in common justice they had no right,—that the Editor of the *Covenanter* had reluctantly consented to certain arrangements,—that a chief part of the injurious treatment already mentioned, took place after these arrangements had been agreed upon,—that Dr. Paul's loose statement respecting principle was made when the members were on their feet to retire, and that reflection on the unfriendly and tyrannical conduct of Dr. Paul and his party, served to show that it would be entirely impossible to act with such men, without being subjected to continued maltreatment, and without excluding from the periodical no small portion of what would render it useful and interesting to the Covenanting community.† No Committee was appointed by Synod, and that which was named at the meeting in Belfast was self-appointed.

In these circumstances, the COVENANTER commenced: and although from that period to the present time, it has enjoyed the countenance and support of the friends of truth, to an extent almost unparalleled in the history of religious periodical literature, it and its conductors have met with nothing but misrepresentation and abuse from those who, from motives too plain to be misconceived, attempted to usurp its exclusive management. Through it they

\* Before this circular was forwarded, a brief note, announcing the arrangements which had been made, was sent to various ministers throughout the church. This note was written in his simplicity by the editor of the *Covenanter*, a day or two after the meeting, before he had sufficient time to reflect on the matter. When the co-operation of Dr. Paul and his friends in conducting the magazine was afterwards declined, this was duly notified to the different parties who had promised their support.

† In none of Dr. Paul's pamphlets had there ever been exhibited or defended a single covenanting peculiarity; and from his conduct for a number of years since, it is evident that he would have sought occasion against the doctrine of a scriptural magistracy, however guardedly expressed. Witness his voluntary and radical pamphlet of 1835, and his most scurrilous and violent attack on the New Scottish Testimony in 1840. The impression that was then entertained respecting his treachery to the Testimony of the church, has been confirmed and strengthened by his subsequent conduct. The fears of the editor of the *Covenanter* and his numerous friends have been more than realized, and his determination to cast him off has been proved to have been substantially well-founded. The Synod afterwards found what the editor of the *Covenanter* did at the first,—that co-operation with such a person in the faithful maintenance of a covenanted testimony was impracticable. Those who knew Dr. Paul best were early aware of this: those who were not, or who were unwilling to believe it, have found this and more to their cost.



have assailed the principles of the church's testimony, and of the reformers and martyrs of Scotland, and while they have put forth unsparing efforts to degrade the Reformed Synod and the Covenanted Church in public opinion,—their constant aim has been to arrogate for themselves pre-eminent wisdom and liberality. We shall afterwards have an opportunity of estimating the merit of these claims; and meanwhile, we cannot better exhibit the spirit and conduct of the parties in the discussions which followed, than by continuing the detail of the proceedings.

## SECTION II.

*Disorderly and injurious conduct of members of the Eastern Presbytery towards the Editor of the 'Covenanter.'*—*Dr. Paul's attacks in the Newspapers.*—*His pamphlet entitled 'The Covenanter reviewed, and Persecution condemned, &c.'*

To the brief note in which they were refused a part in the management of the periodical, Dr. Paul and his coadjutors made out a long and laboured reply, which, instead of being sent to Mr. Houston, was circulated in manuscript throughout the church, wherever the writers thought they could excite prejudice against the *Covenanter* or its editor. This letter was never sent to Mr. Houston, and he only saw it, for the first time, about twelve months after it was written, when it appeared in Dr. Paul's pamphlet, styled the "*Covenanter Reviewed.*" In it, the Editor of the *Covenanter* was treated in the most unchristian manner. He was represented as self-willed and contentious, and his conduct as arbitrary, tyrannical, unpresbyterial, and Independent. At the same time, the men who thus stabbed a young brother in the dark, made trial whether the church would support them in a scheme of establishing a rival periodical, and laboured assiduously to prevent persons from subscribing to the *Covenanter*, and even endeavoured to induce others to withhold subscriptions to it that had been promised. Comment on such conduct is unnecessary,—it was as low and base as it was unpresbyterial and disorderly. The object was evidently to disseminate slander in a way in which it could not possibly be met and refuted,—to condemn unheard, and then to impale their unsuspecting victim, having previously deprived him of all claim upon the sympathy of the community. Notwithstanding these strenuous and persevering efforts to vilify character and sow dissension, Dr. Paul and his friends met with no countenance from the church, to the project of a counter-periodical, and they were compelled to abandon the design. Whatever impression their misrepresentations and slanders may have produced upon their own retainers and admirers, the Christian feeling and good sense of the church frowned upon their disorderly proceedings.

Mortified that their divisive schemes had met with so little encouragement, while the periodical prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations, Dr. Paul and his friends watched their opportunity, and at the close of the first year of the work, when subscribers were to be called upon to renew their pledge of support, a letter from Dr. Paul was published in one of the Belfast news-

papers, \* in which, in a covert and insidious way, the *Covenanter* and its Editor were held up to public odium; and an attempt was made to exhibit the Editor as inculcating bloody and intolerant doctrines, and as opposed to the whole Reformed Church in his views. A few months after, a large pamphlet, also from the pen of Dr. Paul, appeared, bearing the invidious title, "THE COVENANTER REVIEWED, AND PERSECUTION CONDEMNED," thus attempting to identify the magazine with persecuting sentiments, and to exhibit its Editor as a persecutor. In this pamphlet, while not a single sentence in commendation of the periodical was uttered by the reviewer, every thing was done that ingenuity, sophistry, and malice† could direct, to distort and blacken the character of the sentiments taught in the work, and to draw upon it and the Editor the odium of all classes throughout the community. And besides, the discipline of the house of God was opposed and turned into contempt; several articles clearly taught in the standards of the church were openly impugned; and the whole was pervaded by the latitudinarian views, which have since occupied so prominent a place in Dr. Paul's controversial pamphlets.

It must now be completely evident to every lover of Zion's peace and good order, that the course which Dr. Paul adopted was from the first disorderly, and directly calculated to produce confusion within the church, and to excite prejudice from without. It betrayed the feeling that the sense of the church was against him,—that he held views opposed to her standards, and that it was only from those who had an interest in depreciating an honest testimony that he could hope for favour or approbation. Had the Editor of the *Covenanter* been chargeable with all that the gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery alleged against him,—had the periodical been the vehicle of errors even more numerous than its good-natured Reviewer pretended to have discovered, it was clearly a violation of all order to remove the matter from the proper ecclesiastical court to the bar of a public, which has never yet regarded with any favour the faithful advocacy of covenanted principles. Mr. Houston never shrunk from investigation by the proper ecclesiastical judicatory to which he was amenable. On the contrary, in a brief reply to Dr. Paul's Newspaper communication, he expressed his purpose of appealing to the Church's Discipline, and of abstaining from discussion in the public Journals; notwithstanding, his assailant followed in a scurrilous rejoinder. He was willing for a time to stand condemned without a hearing, rather than follow the example which Dr. Paul had set,—a course evidently subversive of all discipline and order. The matters charged against the Editor of the *Covenanter*, were among the most weighty that can be advanced against a minister of religion,—they concerned moral character, and related to alleged errors in doctrine. Dr. Paul and Mr. Houston were members of the same ecclesiastical judicatory; and they had

\* The *Newsletter*.

† Dr. Paul may call the imputing of malice to his attacks upon the *Covenanter* and its editor, judging the heart—scanning motives. We have only to reply, that we judge his *spirit* by his *conduct*, just as we say a man is benevolent or selfish from the tenour of his actions, and apply our Saviour's rule,—“By their fruits ye shall know them.”



taken a solemn vow of adherence to the same ecclesiastical standards. Even had Dr. Paul been justifiable in neglecting, as he did, the least attempt for private brotherly conference on the subjects in dispute, it is clear that his carrying the case all at once to the bar of the public, was at variance with all orderly procedure, and tended to introduce irremediable confusion, so as to lead ultimately to division in the church, and to excite against Covenanters odium and opposition throughout the community. The Synod afterwards explicitly condemned this mode of procedure, for in its Resolutions of 1833, it declared,—“That in case one minister feel hurt by statements made by another minister, he should have recourse to the method of redress prescribed in Scripture: and we therefore most decidedly disapprove of members of Synod writing in opposition to each other, as calculated to introduce confusion, and to bring church government and discipline into contempt.”\* Notwithstanding this pointed rebuke of the Supreme Judicatory, this has been the course which Dr. Paul has, since 1833, as well as before, been uniformly pursuing; and we shall afterwards have frequent occasion to remark, that by reason of such irregularity, the matters in dispute were rendered more and more complicated. It is, moreover, now too evident that on system Dr. Paul adopted this course, as that alone which could effectually accomplish the purpose which he seems to have kept steadily in view. He betrayed, from the first, the consciousness that his latitudinarian sentiments were in opposition to the doctrine of the Standards, from which the courts of the Lord’s house had no inclination to depart; and that the discipline of the church, and the piety and good sense of the people, stood equally opposed to his disorderly procedure, and to his ungenerous attacks upon a youthful brother.† He was aware that the *Covenanter* was still a favourite with the faithful covenanting community, both in this and in other countries, notwithstanding his ferocious attempts to ruin its character and mar its usefulness; and he therefore adopted a method, which amounted, from the first, to a virtual declining of the Synod’s authority, and proclaimed his desire and intention of having the matter determined by newspaper readers, rather than by the authorised courts of the Lord’s house.

That this was no inadvertent course, is apparent from repeated statements in several of Dr. Paul’s pamphlets, in which he discovers the utmost anxiety to have the influence of the public press,—by which he means chiefly the irreligious or infidel newspaper press, introduced as a determining power in the question,‡ rather than to have the matter judged of by ecclesiastical office-bearers, and in

\* Minutes of Synod for 1833, p. 16. Resolutions of Committee, 2d Series,—Resolution 2d.

† The disputes in the Reformed Synod might have been long ago and easily set at rest, had not every successive movement of Dr. Paul, and his party, tended to throw an additional obstacle in the way of solemn judicial investigation and of a righteous settlement.

‡ For a considerable time before the Eastern Presbytery left the Synod, several of its members were in the habit of threatening the Synod and its members with the Newspapers, as often as they (the Eastern Presbytery) attempted to introduce their anti-covenanting novelties, or to coerce their brethren into their disorderly measures. In this unpresbyterial course, Dr. Paul took a leading and very conspicuous part.

which he labours to turn the discipline of the church into ridicule and contempt. Thus in the '*Covenanter Reviewed*,' (Pref. p. iv.) he talks of ecclesiastical discipline contemptuously as a 'rod only fit to frighten a child.' Again, in a foot note of the same publication, p. 94, he speaks of discipline, instead of arresting the progress of error, as a method of allowing it to "spread in geometrical progression;" and in page 95, it is represented as a means of drowning the voice of reason!—as "fit only for the ninth, instead of the nineteenth century,"—as a "masked battery," resorted to in a bad and indefensible cause,—and a subterfuge "dishonourable and inglorious"!! The candid reader, after such statements thus early made by Dr. Paul, and concurred in by his co-presbyters, will cease to wonder at the difficulty which the Reformed Presbyterian Synod had to encounter, in dealing with men who set out with trampling under foot all order, and spurning ecclesiastical control, and whose every measure tended to weaken the bands of authority, and to break in pieces the brotherly covenant. He will cease to wonder at the reproach which those had to endure, who were called at once to defend the standard of sound doctrine, and to repel assailants who attempted also to make breaches in the wall of the church's scriptural discipline and order.

Convinced that Dr. Paul had acted in a manner the most disorderly,—had grievously misrepresented and perverted the sentiments and statements of the *Covenanter*, and published doctrines entirely at variance with the known principles of the Covenanted testimony, the Editor of the *Covenanter* sought redress from the ecclesiastical courts. As Dr. Paul never took, and, so far as we know, was never inclined to take, any private, or pacific, or Christian method of adjusting the differences, and had contemptuously refused a friendly conference, to which he was respectfully invited by brethren in the ministry, deeply concerned for the peace of the church, Mr. Houston saw that there was no course left to him but to proceed by libel against those who had violated order, avowed the disposition to spurn discipline, and plainly proclaimed their departure from principles taught in the church's solemn covenants, and doctrinal standards. This he felt to be a painful duty. He knew the men with whom he had to deal, and he was fully aware of the disagreeable attitude which he was called to assume in prosecuting a libel for irregularity and error against ministers of long standing in the church, and of acknowledged abilities. But however responsible the position, he felt that there was no alternative, but either to suffer character and order and discipline to be trampled down, and dangerous error to spread, or else to apply to the thrones of judgment in the Lord's house, that confusion might be put away, and injured truth might be vindicated. In what merely concerned himself, he was ready at all times to forbear and forgive; but he could not thus deal with matters that immediately concerned the Redeemer's honour. He could not permit truth to be run down, and the order of the sanctuary to be set at nought, and remain silent, without criminality. He felt persuaded from the beginning,—a conviction which subsequent events have only served to strengthen,—that the only proper way



for a church court to deal with a case of this kind, and to terminate the evil, was to receive and investigate charges, and to proceed to censure, instead of allowing parties to indulge in vague allegations, or to mislead the public by appeals to prejudice or feeling. And he always professed his entire willingness to submit to whatever censure the proper ecclesiastical court might inflict, in case any statement in his writings were shewn to be at variance with the Standards of the church, or any point of his conduct in the matter in dispute were found to be censurable. It deserves to be mentioned, that, as far as the writer remembers, Dr. Paul never, throughout the whole course of the controversy, made any offer to have his writings judged by the Standards. There was reason for this significant silence. He could not but know that the Standards and he were completely opposed in several articles; and it was good policy, rather to talk loud of free discussion, and to appeal to passion or prejudice, than to bring the cause for judgment to such a tribunal.

At the meeting of Synod held in Belfast in 1832, which was attended by Delegates from the Reformed Presbyterian Synods in Scotland and America, the Editor of the *Covenanter* exhibited a libel against Dr. Paul for slander, misrepresentation, error, and disorderly procedure; and against Messrs. Alexander, Henry, C. Houston, and R. G. Orr, who had taken part with him in defamation or irregular procedure. This paper was received by Synod, and read publicly, with other documents bearing upon the subject; but from a regard to the circumstances of the members, and perhaps in the hope that the lapse of some time might bring parties nearer to an accommodation, it was agreed that the whole matter should be held *in retentis* till the next annual meeting of Synod.

After a boisterous though unsuccessful attempt, before the final adjournment of Synod, to get the court to swerve from its resolution, Dr. Paul and his friends set themselves, almost immediately after the dissolution of Synod, to counteract the measure that had been adopted, and manifested the same disposition as they had uniformly done,—to be held by no agreement of the ecclesiastical courts to which they had vowed subjection, if it ran counter to their own designs. The pretext which they offered for attempting to violate the agreement of Synod was the publication of the heads of the libel in the report of the Synod's proceedings which was given in the *Covenanter*. Representing the Editor of the *Covenanter* as an object of deserved odium in a public meeting of the Eastern Presbytery, and elsewhere, as far as their influence could extend, they applied to members of Synod who had not been present at the last meeting, and others, to join them in a demand for a *pro re nata* meeting of Synod, to be held in Belfast, for the purpose of investigation. This was in plain and palpable contravention of the Synod's decision, by which it had been agreed that the whole matter should be held under consideration till the next annual meeting. No new matter had arisen to justify the call; and after every attempt had been made to induce the ministers and sessions to concur in the demand for a special meeting of Synod, a majority of the members of Synod, refusing to sign the requisition, showed that they did not approve of the attempt to disturb the peace of

the church, and increase confusion ; and a great majority of those who were not parties in the quarrel, showed in the same way that they disapproved of the measure. The Moderator of Synod for that year, who was the Editor of the *Covenanter*, refused to summon the meeting, on the ground of a requisition thus procured : and because he stood forward in support of the Synod's decision to resist irregularity, to preserve the church's unity and peace, and to consult the advantage and convenience of the members of Synod, he was, as might have been expected, abused in the church courts, from the pulpit, and otherwise, by Dr. Paul and his friends ; and the odious appellations of tyrant, persecutor, and other terms which the vocabulary of abuse and slander plentifully furnished, were unsparingly applied to him.

Foiled in this barefaced attempt to embroil the church, the *movement* party were not idle. As the sentiments of the *Covenanter* had been grossly misrepresented, and, through them, the principles of the church's testimony, on the subject of Civil Magistracy, had been virulently, though not formally, assailed, Mr. Houston, at the request of some of the most esteemed fathers in the church, and many faithful members, published a Discourse on *Christian Magistracy*, which he had preached first to his own congregation, and then by request to two others. In it he had aimed merely to state the doctrine of Christian Magistracy, as it had been exhibited in the doctrinal symbols and most approved writings of the Reformed Churches ; and to vindicate the truth on this article against the perversions, errors, and latitudinarian tenets, by which it had been assailed in former or later times. To avoid all offensive personalities, he had purposely refrained from any mention of those who had attacked himself or the *Covenanter*, and he noticed their sentiments or cavils no farther than they had identified themselves with the opponents of the doctrine of a Scriptural Magistracy, as it is held forth in the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.\*

Against a discourse thus prepared, it could scarcely have been anticipated that there would have been any objection, at least from those who were resting under a solemn vow to hold the doctrine of the Standards on the article of Magistracy. But from the beginning, this was the grand object of opposition and attack by Dr. Paul, and those who thought with him ; and any faithful statement respecting it could not fail to be particularly obnoxious to those who had become tired of a despised testimony. Accordingly, in the interval from the meeting of Synod in 1832, to that in 1833, and after the scheme of a *pro re nata* was defeated, Dr.

\* None of the articles in the *Covenanter* against which Dr. Paul had directed his invectives were written by the Editor ; and although he believed that the sentiments taught in them were in accordance with the Standards of the Church, there were modes of expression and illustration, which he would not for himself have adopted. Occasionally too there were quotations from eminent divines of a former period, introduced in the papers of correspondents, which Dr. Paul, after his peculiar manner, represents as the very sentiments and words of the Editor, but in relation to which no candid critic would ever have thought of attaching so minute and extensive a responsibility to the Editor.



Paul published a review of the *Christian Magistrate*, in four parts,\* at different times, which altogether extended to 182 pages. In these *four pamphlets* which were issued, from month to month, till the time of the meeting of Synod, the Reviewer gave full scope to his powers of distortion and perversion,—deduced the most monstrous consequences from the doctrine of magistratical coercion as declared in the testimony of the church,—assailed the Fourth Term of Communion, as it is held by the church in this country,—and exerted himself to the utmost to heap all kinds of reproach upon the author of the *Christian Magistrate*. Acting upon the old maxim,—“ Throw dirt in plenty, and some of it will stick,”—from the beginning to the end of the review, he dealt in misrepresentation and personality.† Scarcely a single point for commendation was found in the *Christian Magistrate*; and although disinterested and able reviewers had expressed their cordial approbation of it, Dr. Paul could only view it as worthy of unsparing condemnation. It had brought forward the old doctrine of the Reformed Church on the subject of Civil Government, and had adduced such a multitude of quotations from the confessions and testimonies of the Reformed Churches, and the writings of the Reformers, Martyrs and eminent witnesses for truth, that all could judge whether the doctrine taught was in accordance with the uniform testimony of the church. Therefore was the *Christian Magistrate* peculiarly obnoxious to the *liberal* Reviewer; and while he had not the candour or honesty to assail at once the confessions and testimonies of the Reformed Churches, and among these the Westminster Standards and the Testimony of the Covenanting Church, he attacked with special bitterness a publication which only reiterated their doctrines, and illustrated and defended them. Well knowing that these doctrines were not popular, he had recourse to the most effectual method of having them condemned without a hearing. Representing the Discourse as containing the most absurd, contradictory and extravagant sentiments, without one redeeming quality, deducing from isolated expressions the most hateful consequences, he held up both the *Christian Magistrate* and its author as objects of detestation to the whole religious community, and so vehemently and frequently reiterated his allegations, that it was assuredly none of his fault that the author was not expelled from society, or subjected to the fury of the mob.

To meet this unprovoked abuse, so actively and unceasingly persevered in, and to vindicate principle and character thus recklessly assailed, the Editor of the *Covenanter* prepared and published, shortly before the meeting of Synod, in 1833, the “ Reviewer Reviewed,” a defence of the *Covenanter* and Testimony of the church, in reply to Dr. Paul’s review of the *Covenanter*.

\* This mode of publication was adopted, in all probability, as a trial of the extent of support which might be expected for the darling scheme of a rival periodical. If so, it was a miserable failure, for the public were so nauseated with the personalities, calumny, and reproach contained in the first parts of the Review, that the two last parts were allowed to lie on hands, with a very limited demand.

† In one of the parts of the “ Review of the Christian Magistrate,” Mr. Houston’s name occurs upwards of 130 times, and almost always connected with something revolting in principle.

The object of this publication was not to withdraw the appeal from the ecclesiastical courts, but to dispel prejudice, and remove misconception respecting important truths that had been misrepresented and caricatured; and to place before those who were to judge in the matter, a full view of the questions at issue, and of their bearings upon the church and the nations. We shall afterwards have occasion to refer to the method which Dr. Paul has taken to bring this work into discredit. But it is worthy of special remark, that in all his outcry about *untruths* and *errors* in the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," he has neither attempted a refutation of the arguments by which his sophistry, perversions, and errors are exposed, nor once referred to the *contrast* which we exhibited towards the end of the pamphlet, between his published sentiments and the principles taught in the standards. There can be but one conclusion respecting this omission. He felt that the arguments were too strong for him; and he could not fairly look such a contrast in the face. Let him do what he has never yet, in any instance, attempted—first, shew plainly what are his sentiments on the article of the magistrate's power *circa sacra*; and then show how these accord with the Standards of the church. If he cannot do this, as we feel persuaded he cannot, let him drop the mask and openly impugn the Standards at once, as some of his admirers have done, and he will at least earn the praise of candour and manliness, in his opposition to what he affects to consider pernicious error.

### SECTION III.

*The discussion before the Reformed Synod in 1833.—Resolutions of Synod respecting the dispute on Magistracy.—Systematic attempts of Dr. Paul and his party to violate the settlement of Synod.*

The general expectation of the church in this country was, that the whole matter in dispute between Dr. Paul and the Editor of the *Covenanter* would come under judicial cognizance, at the meeting of Synod in 1833; and both parties came before the supreme court, prepared to submit their published sentiments and conduct to its inspection. Subsequent events have showed that their views in submitting the case to Synod, and in relation to the result, were far different. While the Editor of the *Covenanter* professed his entire willingness to have his principles and conduct judged by the Standards and discipline of the church, and to submit to censure, in case they should be found blameable, there is evidence that Dr. Paul and his friends never intended, on their part, such a reference or submission. At the time, the terror of division in the church was artfully employed to prevent the members of Synod from conducting the process to censure; and it was declared that if Dr. Paul's principles or proceedings were publicly condemned, this would be the result. Every means was resorted to, to prevent the matter from taking the course of judicial investigation and censure. The constant watchword of Dr. Paul and his friends was "*Free Discussion*," which with them was but



another expression for trampling under foot the discipline of the sanctuary. They, too, brought to Synod those agents of the public press, who had shown unmasked hostility to the Westminster Standards, that still greater odium might be heaped upon the church, by misrepresenting the state of the question, and by partial reporting.

At this meeting of Synod, the papers which had been held *in retentis* since last meeting, were taken under consideration. The chief of these was the *libel* preferred by the *Editor of the Covenanter* against Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters. The Synod agreed not to take up the paper as a regular libel, on the ground that it had been served upon the parties libelled by the accuser, instead of by the court that was to judge of its relevancy; but to proceed with it as *charges* against Dr. Paul and his friends, allowing them, of course, opportunity of defence. This step in the commencement of the investigation must always be a subject of regret, as it introduced the practice of consuming the time of the judicatory with interminable discussions, instead of applying the rod of discipline for the correction of error and disorder. Even admitting that the manner of serving the libel was not accordant with usage,—for in every other respect it was a libel prepared in due form,—it had clearly been the most orderly course, as the matters contained in it were found relevant, by being admitted to be charges which ought to be entertained, to have ordered the proper steps to be taken, and deferred investigation till this should be done. The Synod, however, were sincerely anxious to preserve the peace and unity of the church; and, in all probability, influenced, in some degree, by the threat of division, they adopted a course in which they hoped to maintain inviolate the testimony to which they were pledged, and to reconcile parties at variance. The charges embodied in the libel of the Editor of the *Covenanter*, against Dr. Paul, as principal, and Messrs. Alexander, Henry, C. Houston, and R. G. Orr, aiding and abetting, were the following:—

- I. "Gross irregularity in his conduct towards Mr. Houston, as a minister and member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church,—in charging him with error in doctrine, and impeaching his moral character in various publications extensively circulated, without process before the proper judicatory; and in impugning the discipline of the church, and setting up a public plea for departure therefrom."
- II. "Endeavouring to violate the unity and peace of the church,—in sending a letter, quoted in the "*Covenanter Reviewed*," p. 80, to some ministers, elders, and members of various congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, with an accompanying note; in publishing two letters in the *Belfast Newsletter*, respecting the magistrate's power *circa sacra*; in refusing a conference before the members of the Northern Presbytery, at their meeting in Ballymena; and in publishing sentiments at variance with the basis of our Covenanted Uniformity."

- III. "Error in doctrine,—in denying the right of the Christian Civil Magistrate to interfere for supporting the true religion, and the suppression of heresy and idolatry, and to employ civil pains and penalties in any case for suppressing heresy and idolatry; in pleading for the extension of *Passive Toleration* to heretics and idolaters beyond the limits assigned in our Standards; in misrepresenting the character of the former Economy; and in mis-stating the doctrine of a *particular providence*."
- IV. "Charging the Editor of the *Covenanter* with error in doctrine, and with holding detestable principles—representing him as holding erroneous views relative to magistracy, adoption, &c.—as advocating the application of capital punishments in all cases, for the suppression of heresy and idolatry, and as the abettor of persecution; and exhibiting the *Covenanter* as teaching error, by publishing garbled extracts from that periodical, and distorted views of the statements therein contained, and adducing extracts from other writings in opposition to them, that do not bear upon the subject of the magistrate's power in matters of religion, or that relate not to the particular exercise of it referred to in the extracts from the *Covenanter*."
- V. "Casting contempt on the subordinate Standards of the Covenanting church,—keeping them out of view in the discussion, and substituting for them unauthorised publications, as if they were not to be fully maintained by those who have vowed adherence to them; gainsaying especially a statement of the Second Book of Discipline, and denying those parts of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the National Covenant, which speak of the Magistrate's duty in suppressing heresy and idolatry."
- VI. "Numerous slanders, gross perversions and misrepresentations of facts in his (Dr. Paul's) publications against the *Covenanter*, declaring that its Editor holds opinions opposed to those of the Reformed Synods in Ireland and Scotland, and that his principles are bloody and exterminating, and such as justly expose him to the resentment of different religious communities,—representing him as violating the sanctuary of the dead, and chargeable with the unpleasant consequences of this controversy," &c. &c.
- VII. "Endeavouring to injure his (Mr. H.'s) literary property in the *Covenanter*, and diminish the circulation of the work."
- In evidence of each charge, specific, and in some cases numerous references were given to Dr. Paul's writings, which need not here be quoted.

The arguments and proofs in support of these charges were patiently listened to by the court. Dr. Paul was heard at considerable length in reply; but it must be admitted that, his defence was a failure. He never attempted to meet the grand allegation advanced by the Editor of the *Covenanter*,—that his published sentiments were in full accordance with the doctrine of the Standards, while those of Dr. Paul were in several points dia-



metrically opposed to them. The utmost length to which he ever went on this article, was attempting to show that his views were sustained by certain explanations of the Standards, which, however, did not bear upon the article in dispute. He thus virtually admitted, that the plain and unambiguous declarations of the Standards were against him. He took the course of arguing the point *de novo*, as if the Standards had said nothing authoritatively on the subject, or as if he was under no obligation to hold with them on the question. And he even went so far in his defence as to declare that "*He would defend the Standards as far as they were defensible,*" and to affirm that "*he was not acting inconsistently, when he opposed what he conceived to be error in them!*" Although he afterwards withdrew these expressions, at the instance probably of some of his more cautious friends, it was quite evident, at the time, from the line of defence which he assumed, and from his subsequent conduct, that these declarations in reality expressed the views which he entertained of the Standards. And surely there can be but one opinion in reference to such an avowal. Every member on entering the church, and every minister at his ordination, solemnly declares that he believes every part of the Standards to be Scriptural, and vows to maintain every article contained in them. It is on the faith that this vow is kept, that the one enjoys the privileges of the church, and that the other is recognised as a watchman in Zion. To hold afterwards that some parts of the Standards are not defensible, and that they contain error, is a complete abandonment of them as standards, and a plain declaration that the vow is no longer binding. Yet what shall we think of persons, who, while they have adopted such sentiments, from year to year exact from intrants into the church a vow of unreserved adherence to the Standards,—and who yet have the effrontery to declare that they have not in any particular departed from the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church? Such declarations for a time deceive the simple, and serve a party purpose; but taken in connexion with the views of the Standards put forward by Dr. Paul in the expressions which we have quoted, they can be considered as nothing else than a violation of a solemn covenant, and an insidious way of opening the door to the loosest principles, under the guise of still holding by a scriptural standard.

After a lengthened hearing of the charges, and defence, the Synod appointed a Committee to draw out a declaration, expressive of its judgment respecting the whole matter. The report contained two series of resolutions,—the one relating to doctrine, and the other to the conduct of the parties. In the first, were a number of propositions concerning the Redeemer's Headship,—the duty of nations to submit to his authority,—the qualifications and duties of Christian rulers, &c., a declaration of "continued and stedfast adherence" to the subordinate Standards of the church, and an explicit condemnation of persecuting principles. In the second series, the Synod expressed the opinion that the Editor of the *Covenanter* had acted "*injudiciously*" in the steps taken at the commencement of the periodical, while they "*decidedly disapproved*" of the method to which Dr. Paul had resorted, in over-

looking the method of redress prescribed in the Scriptures, and of thrusting the dispute before the public by means of the press, "as calculated to introduce confusion, and to bring church government and discipline into contempt."\*

It is unnecessary to offer any lengthened comment on the course which the Synod adopted upon this occasion. As we have already expressed regret that a firm and faithful application of the discipline of the church was not made from the commencement of the controversy, so at this distance we cannot but feel,—what some of the most intelligent and devoted members of the church at the time declared,—that had the Synod, instead of bringing in a number of resolutions,—good as far as they went, but leaving various points in dispute untouched,—clearly marked and condemned the instances of departure from the Standards in the publications that had been issued, and censured irregularity in conduct, where it had been proved, the progress of the evil had been much better arrested, and much of the confusion that followed might have been prevented. General declarations of ecclesiastical courts, however excellent, where an explicit Standard of doctrine is already held, can never safely be taken as a substitute for the faithful application of discipline;—and resolutions, liable to some latitude of interpretation, can in no wise be so effectual to reclaim offending brethren, or to prevent further offence and disorder, as the solemn judicial sentence of a court of Christ. However, the Resolutions of the Synod of 1833, were, as far as they went, good; and they went nearly as far as we expected, considering that those who would have taken part with the Eastern Presbytery were then *much more numerous* than when the standard of rebellion was hoisted, and war against the church proclaimed, in 1840. Had the resolutions been properly adhered to afterwards, the intentions of the court had, in a great measure, been realised. Actuated by the love of peace, desirous of preserving the unity of the church, and of terminating unseemly collisions between brethren; and in all probability, not suspecting at the time that the party who have recently declined the Synod's authority, had so far abandoned the distinctive principles of the testimony, as they afterwards discovered they had done, the Synod adopted a moderate pacific measure.

\* In the excess of that lenity which the Synod showed to Dr. Paul and those who followed his divisive courses, his name was not mentioned here, but Mr. Houston's was put forward in connexion with acting *injudiciously*,—a charge which is often brought against the most faithful men, and those parts of their conduct which have been of eminent benefit to the church. The Synod's indulgence towards Dr. Paul, was not owing to any leaning towards his principles; but we cannot help thinking that while the committee calculated on our dutiful submission, the threat of separation and apprehensions of injury to the congregations of the church from the recklessness of the separatists, were not without their effects. It is quite evident that the "*decided disapproval*" expressed by the Synod plainly referred to the course which had been taken by Dr. Paul, as it was he who had disregarded the scriptural mode of redress, and had applied, through the press, to a public not inclined to relish covenanting principles. All that the Editor of the *Covenanter* had written, in reply, was purely in self-defence. It was a heavy sentence of disapprobation upon the first attempts of a ringleader in defection, that his conduct was calculated "to introduce confusion, and to bring church government and discipline into contempt." How singularly has his subsequent conduct in this dispute verified this statement!



If, in some points, as simple-minded Covenanters averred, the watchmen were less explicit than might have been expected, they did, at the same time, declare their unwavering attachment to all the truths of the Testimony, and avowed those principles respecting civil government which plainly implied the restraint and correction of public offences against the precepts of the first table of the Decalogue. Thus the Synod declared, in the first series of resolutions—"It is the duty of a Christian and scripturally enlightened nation, *in their national capacity*, to employ all scriptural means to support and promote true and undefiled religion, and to discountenance and suppress error, ungodliness, and immorality:"\* And again—"It is the duty of the Christian magistrate, ruling in a Christian nation, to execute the wholesome and scriptural laws established by the community, and according to the power vested in him as the minister of God for good, to exercise his office and employ his authority, in a scriptural manner, for the good of the church of Christ, and in support of the authority both of the first and second tables of the Divine law."† In both these resolutions, the duty of civil rulers, *in their official capacity*, to support and promote the truth, and to suppress error and ungodliness, is plainly asserted; and in the second, the employment of official power and authority in vindication of both tables of the Divine law, is inculcated as a solemn duty of the Christian magistrate. It is clear, moreover, that other methods for advancing truth and repressing error, than mere precept and example, are implied in the Synod's statement; for these are not so much means competent to nations or magistrates in their official character, as to individuals. True it is, these duties are to be performed by "*scriptural means*;" but lest any should allege that civil restraint and coercion are not amongst the means warranted by Scripture, these declarations are immediately connected with the Resolution in which,—"a continued and steadfast adherence to the subordinate Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church" is affirmed. The connexion obviously implies, that by these Standards we are to be directed in relation to what is the way in which civil rulers are to employ their official power and authority in maintaining the honour of the Divine law. Others may claim a liberty to dispute whether civil coercion and restraint of gross heretics, idolaters and blasphemers, be an exercise of civil authority sanctioned by Scripture:—but to those who have received the Standards of the church as scriptural, and are resolved honestly to maintain them, there is no room left for discussion on this article. These Standards do most plainly and unequivocally teach the doctrine of magistratical coercion, and the proofs which they exhibit from sacred Scripture show that they regard this principle as authorised by the word of truth. A few quotations at present may suffice to confirm a statement which the uniform testimony of all the authorised documents and approved writings of the church, on the subject, verifies:—

"The Civil Magistrate may and ought to suppress, by corporal or civil punishments, such as by spreading error or heresy, or by

\* Minutes of Synod for 1833, p. 15.

† Ibid.

fomenting schism, greatly dishonour God, dangerously hurt religion, and disturb the peace of the kirk. Which heads of doctrine (howsoever opposed by the authors and fomenters of the foresaid error respectively), the General Assembly doth firmly believe, own, maintain, and commend unto others, as solid, true, orthodox, grounded upon the word of God, consonant to the judgment both of the ancient and the best reformed kirks."—Eighth Head of Doctrine, Acts Assembly, 1647.

"And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature or, to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church and by the power of the civil magistrate."—Westminster Confession, chap. xx. art. 4.

"As also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; and according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry."—Larger Catechism, quest. 108.

Among the sins forbidden in the Second Commandment is mentioned, "tolerating a false religion."—Larger Catechism, quest. 109.

"No less wicked is it for a magistrate to protect, by a promiscuous toleration, all heretics, heresies, and errors; yea, it is a manifest breach of trust, and plain perverting the end of his office, seeing he is appointed to be *custos et vindex utriusque tabulæ*, intrusted with the concerns of God's glory, as well as the interests of men." Act, Declaration, and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church,—p. 83.

"Which power magistrates are especially to exert for the outward defence of the church of God, against all her external enemies, restraining, or otherwise punishing, as the case may require, all open blasphemers, idolaters, false worshippers, obstinate heretics, with all avowed contemners of the worship and discipline of the house of God; and by his civil sanction to corroborate all the laws and ordinances of Christ's house, providing and enjoining, that every thing in the house of the God of heaven, be done according to the law of the God of heaven."—Act, Declaration, and Testimony,—p. 164.

"It is his (the magistrate's) duty to see that the violation of the moral law,—in open contempt of the being of God,—in gross and public idolatry,—in open blasphemy of the name of God,—or in open profanation of the Sabbath, as well as by injustice, licentiousness and violence, be duly restrained, as scandalizing to religion and the church of God, as hurtful to the peace and good order of society, and as provoking the displeasure and rebukes of the Almighty against the nation."—New Scottish Testimony,—p. 99.

From these quotations, which clearly express the sense of the Standards on the point in question, it must be completely apparent, that when the Synod speak, in their resolutions, of promoting true religion and suppressing error and ungodliness "*by authority*,"



and by "*scriptural means*," and couple this with a full approval of the subordinate Standards, they can mean nothing else than to maintain, as do these Standards, the authoritative coercion of gross heresy, idolatry and blasphemy, as a doctrine accordant with the Scriptures of truth. How far Dr. Paul and his party are from holding such a sentiment, need not here be told; and of consequence, his real opposition to the Synod's resolutions of 1833, even when professing to approve of them, and his utter contrariety to the Standards, must be apparent to a demonstration.

We are aware that an expression in the Eighth of the Synod's doctrinal resolutions has been adduced by some, who wish to preserve the character of holding the Standards, while they affect the praise of excessive sagacity and liberality, and love of unity and peace, to prove that it is improper, at the present day, to teach any thing respecting magistratical coercion of idolatry, blasphemy, &c. It is declared that "the Synod consider that it would be injudicious and unwise, at the present time, to attempt entering into detail of the several things which ought to be done by the Christian magistrate at that happy period to which we look forward, believing assuredly that such matters will be easily determined at that future period of light and love." The first glance must satisfy any candid person that this statement cannot be understood as denying the propriety of teaching the doctrine of magistratical coercion; for this is expressly taught in the Standards to which the Synod had just before renewed its solemn pledge of adherence. It cannot for a moment be taken as forbidding to enter into detail, as far as the Standards *have entered into detail* on this subject; for such a prohibition would be utterly at variance with the vows which are required of the office-bearers and members of the church, and with one of the Synod's own resolutions, already recited. But it does most properly debar, what New Light innovators so loudly and frequently demand,—all details as to the mode of restraint and punishment to be applied to gross violators of the first table of the Divine law. The *principle* it leaves untouched, or rather takes for granted,—the various *modes and degrees* of its application it leaves undefined, till the arrival of the period when the testimony of Jesus shall be universally ascendant, and when magistrates shall be generally, what they ought to be, "ministers of God to men for good," a "terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." The Synod's disclaimer of persecuting and intolerant principles was a proper sequel to the assertion of the doctrine of the exercise of magistratical authority in religion, and to the declaration of continued adherence to the Standards; as, notwithstanding all the clamour and reproach of men of latitudinarian sentiments, the principles of the Standards, and of those who most firmly maintain them, are entirely opposed to all *that can justly be called* persecution. If conduct be a proper exposition or expression of principle, then a triumphant and unanswerable appeal may be made to those who, both at a former and later period, have most firmly held Scotland's Covenanted Standards, to prove that their sentiments were opposed to persecution. While on the other hand, the spirit and conduct of the men that have belied the Standards, and slandered those who hold the doctrine taught in them respecting civil government, though misnamed liberal, are in reality most intolerant.

On the whole, the Resolutions of 1833, as far as they went, were worthy of being embraced and maintained. Rightly understood, they held forth the same views of magistracy as the Reformed church had always maintained; they left the ultimate appeal where it must ever lie,—with the Standards supreme and subordinate; and while they explained away no sentiment contained in them, they left full liberty to ministers and people to declare, propagate and defend any truth contained in them. Not a single principle that had been brought forward in the *Covenanter*, did these resolutions call in question, much less, even by implication, condemn; while it is perfectly apparent that in more than one instance they contained a condemnation of the New Light doctrines.

Believing therefore that the Resolutions of Synod were in accordance with what he had taught on the article of magistracy, and that in no particular did they prevent him from inculcating and vindicating any article contained in the testimony of the church, the Editor of the *Covenanter* had no hesitation in acquiescing in them, and Dr. Paul likewise expressed his concurrence. From the view which we have taken of the doctrines to which they testified, as contrasted with Dr. Paul's published sentiments, which he has frequently reasserted, we are forced to come to the conclusion; that either he did not see the proper bearings of the Resolutions; or perceiving that the sense of the church was against him, and that he had utterly failed in his defence, he made a merit of necessity; and not then being prepared to break with the Synod, and probably hoping that he might yet be able to lead away the church from some of its avowed principles, he deemed it wisest to acquiesce in resolutions which condemned his principles and conduct, rather than to come to an open rupture with the Synod. Of the *policy* of such a course there can be but one opinion,—of its honesty, the reader will be better able to judge, when he shall have perused the detail of Dr. Paul's future proceedings.

It is manifest, that if his concurrence in the resolutions of 1833 had been given in good faith, Dr. Paul would have felt himself bound not to re-assert on the article of the Christian magistrate's authority, any sentiment that militated against the doctrine of the Standards, and to refrain from writing in opposition to his brethren in the ministry, and from every thing calculated to introduce confusion, and to bring the government and discipline of the church into contempt. His whole course since, has, however, been in palpable opposition to the Synod's pacific settlement; and we are compelled to conclude, that either he did not embrace the resolutions in sincerity, or that afterwards, while professing to hold them, he found it more accordant with his interest to act in complete contravention of them, and this course he adopted, reckless of the character, peace, or unity of the church.

At the final adjournment of the Synod in 1833, the ministers and elders separated in apparent harmony and good feeling. On the part of the Editor of the *Covenanter*, the settlement which had been come to was viewed as an adjustment of the subject in dispute, to which he was solemnly bound to adhere; and he sincerely desired to preserve it inviolate. Although some of the most experienced and faithful members of the church, who were



steadily attached to the periodical, blamed the Synod for not bringing to censure Dr. Paul and his friends, and for vagueness in the resolutions, the Editor of the *Covenanter*, even at the risk of incurring a diminution of attachment and support, discountenanced such allegations, and always declared that he considered himself bound to adhere to the deed of Synod. From this resolution he never afterwards swerved; and even when placed in the painful dilemma of having his principles and character misrepresented and reproached, or of violating the agreement of 1833, he permitted repeated attacks to pass in silence, rather than, by defending himself before the public, trench, or seem to trench, upon any part of the Synod's settlement. Did the other party keep faith with the Synod, and testify regard to the unity and peace of the church? Their whole conduct, from that day till the time when they declined the Synod's authority, and undisguisedly erected the standard of rebellion, declares otherwise. It proclaims that they regarded the settlement of 1833, no farther binding than it suited their interest; and that nothing would satisfy them but ascendancy for their latitudinarian sentiments, or rending the church. For a time, it is true, they acted covertly,—but still the darling scheme was carrying forward, and every succeeding measure served more fully to develope it.

#### SECTION IV.

*Misreporting, and vilifying the Synod, and the principles of the Church, in Liberal and Radical Newspapers, encouraged by Dr. Paul and his friends.—Synod of 1834.—Attempt of Mr. John Nevin, Licentiate, to embroil the Church, in which he was countenanced by Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery.—Synod of 1835.—Inconsistency and gross anti-covenanting sentiments of Dr. Henry, on the American Question, &c.*

From the meeting of Synod in 1833, may be dated the commencement of attempts to contravene the decisions of the Supreme Judicatory, and to prejudice the public against the church and her Standards, in relation to the points in dispute, by means of a certain portion of the Newspaper press. The course taken was a systematic following out of the disorderly method, of removing the whole matter from ecclesiastical inspection to the bar of a public, ill prepared to form a right judgment on the question, and was consequently a manifest infringement of the Synod's settlement. It was doing indirectly what the court had prohibited being done in any shape. Feeling that all their advantage lay in appeals to popular errors and prejudices, they sisted the matter before a tribunal that had already condemned faithful Covenanters; and when they could not move the Synod and the church at large from their avowed principles, they tried to sink both the Church and her Standards in public opinion.

At the Synod of 1833, there was present as a *special reporter* of one of the Belfast newspapers,—the *Newsletter*,—a gentleman who once professed to hold Covenanting principles, but had long since abandoned them, and had on more than one occasion, *con amore*, la-

boured to prevent, among the large Presbyterian body in this country, any nearer approach to the Westminster Standards. Report said that this gentleman was specially engaged and paid by Dr. Paul and his friends, for the purpose of reporting for them the proceedings of Synod. Be this as it may, the report of the Synod's proceedings in the *Newsletter* was well calculated to serve their purpose. By misstating the question before the Synod,—by suppressing much of the reasoning in favour of the doctrine of the Standards; and misrepresenting those who opposed innovation, and exhibiting Dr. Paul and his friends in the most favourable light, and by editorial comments, in which prejudice was attempted to be raised both against the Synod and the testimony of the church, the public was misled, and reproach was plentifully heaped upon those who stood forth to maintain the truth.\* This report, which, as being from the editor of one of the principal Presbyterian Newspapers of the North, was duly copied into other provincial papers, was so manifestly unfair, that honest Covenanters were generally dissatisfied with it, and a number of those who had previously preferred the *Newsletter*, ceased to subscribe for it. The Editor of the *Covanter*, and other members of Synod who valued the truth, considered that any communication from them in the newspapers, even in answer to misrepresentation and abuse, would have the appearance of following the disorderly course which Dr. Paul had adopted, might protract disputes which they trusted were now settled, and lead to a violation of the Synod's agreement; they therefore suffered the matter to pass in silence, and allowed their character and principles, and those of the church, to be misrepresented before the public, rather than continue a controversy which appeared to be happily set at rest. Whether this was the best course,—whether some of the members of Synod, who were not so directly concerned as parties in the dispute, might not have advantageously exhibited the true state of the question in the newspapers, and thus have cleared the character of the church when aspersed, we will not pretend to determine; but one thing is now certain, that, owing to this silence, misrepresentation and prejudice were circulated to a great extent. While Dr. Paul and his friends received, from the unprincipled and malignant conductors of newspapers, abundant praises for their *liberality*, their brethren were represented as narrow-minded bigots and persecutors, and the Synod and the Standards of the church were declared to be most intolerant. Such representations were spread in many quarters, without any means being left for those who desired to walk in the good old way of their fathers' testimony, of having their case cleared before the public. A number of individuals, mostly members of the church, and of good standing in society, who were present at the sessions of Synod,

\* In the report of the Synod's proceedings, by the *special reporter* of the *Newsletter*, the question before the Synod was represented to be the "*burning or drowning of heretics*," &c. The Editor of the *Covanter* was, of course, represented as pleading for such punishments. Astonishment was expressed at the intolerance and fatuity of the Synod, for permitting the subject of magistral coercion to be argued before them, and for allowing any thing to be surmised respecting the orthodoxy of so distinguished and liberal a divine as Dr. Paul.



in 1833, indignant at the perversions and misrepresentations of the special report, offered to the editor of a provincial paper, which had copied from the Belfast paper, the account of the Synod's proceedings, a brief and impartial statement of the subject in dispute, pledging their character for its correctness; but this was refused insertion, with the remark of the editor, that he had confidence in the accuracy of his friend, the special reporter of the *Newsletter*.

What concern Dr. Paul and his friends had in these garbled and unjust reports, it is easy to relate. They did not openly and honestly come forward, and authenticate them with their names; they did not publicly acknowledge the responsibility of authorship; but they did every thing else that served to show that they had a main hand in their preparation and circulation. They were known to be in the confidence of the *special* reporter, and in frequent consultation with him: they circulated the reports in a pamphlet form throughout the church, pushing them, by means of disaffected and troublesome individuals, into congregations where the pastors wished to preserve peace: they were, in some cases, represented as the Minutes of Synod; and the effect was increased, in 1836, by the accidental (shall we call it?) detention of the published Minutes of Synod,\* till after these *ex parte* reports had time to circulate throughout the church. The New Light party in America, who had abandoned the principles and fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and with whom Dr. Paul and his friends were known to be in intimate correspondence, reprinted the *special report* of the Synod's proceedings of 1833, accompanied with a *preface*, in which, as a matter of course, peculiar pleasure was expressed in the progress of *liberal* sentiments in the Irish Reformed Synod, accompanied with disapprobation of the bigotry of those who opposed innovation; and implied censure was cast upon the Synod for not following the new lights of liberality and universal toleration. Such proceedings were manifestly opposed, equally to the spirit and the letter of the resolutions of Synod. They aimed directly to subvert them, and exalt the principles and conduct of Dr. Paul and his friends, on the overthrow, as far as public opinion was concerned, of the church's testimony, and of the character of the Synod. The curtain was too thin to conceal from discerning persons, either within or without the church, the principal actors in this work of dishonest misrepresentation. Dr. Paul and his friends plainly lent themselves to this treacherous warfare; if they did not manufacture the newspaper reports, they received them, in a pamphlet form, from the printers, and they and their reckless agents scattered them throughout the church; and they are thus justly chargeable with contributing to propagate immense prejudice and misrepresentation, both in relation to the church's principles, and to the subjects that were in discussion before the ecclesiastical judicatories.

\* The Clerk of Synod, whose duty it was to get the Minutes printed and circulated, as soon after the meeting of Synod as possible, was the Rev. C. Houston, a member of the Eastern Presbytery, one of Dr. Paul's seconders, whom he has frequently bespattered with loathsome flattery, and a person who has occasionally lent or procured a willing hand for the newspaper slandering of the church.

Honest Covenanters very generally felt indignant at these misrepresentations. They have no wish to conceal their principles, nor do they see any reason to be ashamed of the proceedings of the courts which have been entrusted with the administration of the government and discipline of the sanctuary. Let impartial accounts be given, and they have no objection that these be published and circulated as widely as possible. But they consider that they have just ground of complaint when matters of fact are suppressed or perverted, when principles are misstated, and odium is raised against them for simply endeavouring to walk by the footsteps of the flock, while desiring to cherish feelings of good-will towards all men. They have not failed to observe the unmeasured commendation which the manufacturers of these garbled reports, and the author of every spiteful paragraph, in newspapers or magazines, against the church, have uniformly bestowed upon Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters; and as they must be well aware of the active part which Dr. Paul and his adherents have taken in circulating such publications throughout the church, they have learned to connect them with the whole of these unmanly and dishonourable attacks, and to ascribe to them, as authors or instigators, the prejudice and persecution which have of late been directed against the covenanted cause, by means of the *liberal* press.

At the meeting of Synod in 1834, little was done, during the public sessions, that had a tendency to keep alive the late discussions, and, in general, public business was conducted with a considerable measure of harmony. Dr. Paul and other members of the Eastern Presbytery indeed discovered the same disposition that had, for a long time, actuated them,—to prevent or retard any measures that tended to a decisive exhibition of covenanted principles; and they acted together as a party or faction, seeking incessantly their own pre-eminence, and having interests and objects different from those, to the advancement of which the Synod considered themselves pledged.

When the subject of the division in the American Covenanting Church was under consideration, Dr. Paul and his party had a principal hand in preventing the full recognition, as brethren, of those who continued honestly to adhere to the Covenanted Testimony, and the rejection of those who had given up some parts of that testimony, while they still claimed the name of Covenanters.\*

\* Dr. Henry, who had been sent as a delegate to the American Synod, at a large expense to the church, attended the meeting of that court, which was held previously to that in which the division took place; and there and during his sojourn in America, he could not but have had opportunities of perceiving the workings of the leaven of New Light innovations, and the crisis that was approaching. Had he informed the Synod, on his return, of these important matters, their timely interference in the way of advice or remonstrance might have had some effect in preserving the unity of the American Church. But he gave not the most distant hint on this subject in his report to Synod, but instead, delivered a speech full of egotism and personal compliments, from beginning to end. There was reason for the Dr.'s silence on the affair of the American division. The New Light innovators in America, from the beginning calculated on their party in the Irish Synod. Drs. Paul and Henry could boast, even from the pulpit, of their correspondence with them; and it was as little as they could do to plead their cause, when the state of the American Church was under the consideration of Synod.



Towards the close of the Synod's proceedings, the innovating party showed, that although they had not considered it prudent, at this time, to bring forward their latitudinarian sentiments themselves, they made no scruple of allowing others to do it for them, and of embroiling the church by discussions, which, according to the settlement of last year, should have been completely at rest. The missionary station in Liverpool had offered a call to Mr. John Nevin, licentiate, to become their pastor, which was presented at Synod and accepted. The Synod appointed the Missionary Board as a committee to take the necessary steps for Mr. Nevin's settlement, and pledged the church to make an annual grant for three years, to a large amount, for the support of a minister in Liverpool. Before the final adjournment of Synod, Mr. Nevin requested and obtained leave to address the Synod in private, on certain matters which it was necessary to adjust to his satisfaction, before he could accept ordination as a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He then proceeded to occupy the attention of the court for not less than *two hours*, pointing out what he called *scruples*, in relation to his subscribing the formula; but which were discrepancies, contradictions, and misstatements of facts, which he alleged he had discovered in the Acts of Assembly, Act and Testimony, and other approved documents of the Reformed Church. It was very observable that the passages quoted and commented upon, had chiefly an immediate reference to the subjects that had been in dispute respecting the magistrate's power, toleration, &c. Mr. Nevin went so far as to state, that had he fully considered these matters before receiving license, or entering the membership of the church, he might have hesitated giving unconditional assent to the Testimony, and that he could not receive ordination till his scruples on these points were removed. The Synod generally evinced disapprobation of this attempt, as it seemed to them, to cast in the apple of discord; and although they never refused to give explanations to satisfy tender consciences, yet as Mr. Nevin had denied some of the statements of the Testimony, they considered him unworthy of being dealt with as a candidate for ordination while he persevered in such views. On the other hand, Dr. Paul pleaded with all his might in behalf of Mr. Nevin, the force of conscientious scruples, as did others of the Eastern Presbytery. The subsequent proceedings in this painful affair,—the close alliance which Mr. Nevin has, ever since he came into Synod, maintained with Dr. Paul and his party, occasionally even shooting beyond them in the proposal of sweeping changes,—and his joining with them under the standard of rebellion, can now leave little doubt on any reflecting mind, that he was a fit tool to promote the cause of innovation, and perpetuate strife in the church. The Synod, earnestly desirous of maintaining peace, and at the same time of showing tenderness towards Mr. Nevin, agreed that he should present his scruples or exceptions in writing, at the next regular meeting, that they might know how to deal with him, and advised him to confer with some of the most aged and experienced of the ministers, with a view to the removal of his scruples.\*

\* There are few that know Mr. Nevin who will accord to him the praise of originality in the exceptions which he advanced against the Testimony of the Church.



During the interval, till the next annual meeting of Synod, the Missionary Board, although not directly charged with any concern on the subject, endeavoured to do all in their power to obviate Mr. Nevin's objections, and to bring him to a right view of his duty as a Licentiate of the church. They held several conferences with him, and appointed a sub-committee to converse with him on the subject. These measures proved in a great degree fruitless; and the matter remained unsettled till the next meeting of Synod, the gentlemen who acted behind the scenes well knowing how to employ a simple but obstinate young man to accomplish their darling scheme of sowing dissension, and of sapping and undermining the received basis of ministerial and ecclesiastical fellowship.

### *Synodical Meeting of 1835.*

At the meeting of Synod held in Londonderry, in 1835, the innovating party persevered in their design to break in upon the established order of the sanctuary, and to weaken the bonds of faithful discipline. The course taken by several members of the Eastern Presbytery, and the arguments employed by them, were entirely new in a Covenanting Synod, and such as betrayed a wide departure from sound principle. Thus, in the discussion on the American question, not only did they oppose the *Amendment*, which sought a fraternal recognition for those who still held the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, but in pleading for the adoption of the Resolutions of the committee, Dr. Henry, who seemed to be the leader of the party, actually argued on the anti-covenanting principle, which has been assumed as fundamental by the American New Lights, — that the United States Government has claims to be regarded as a proper Christian Government, and to be recognised as the moral ordinance of God.\* Although Dr. Paul did not in direct terms put forward the principle, he expressed no dissent from the sentiments avowed by Dr. Henry, and he demurred against representing the United States Constitution as *atheistical*, as the committee in its Resolutions, and the American Reformed Church in its Testimony had done. He dwelt chiefly on what has always been a favourite mode with him, — misrepresenting the character and designs of those whom he viewed as opponents, — persons concerned to maintain the integrity of the testimony, and to resist innovation. He tried to show that the object of the supporters of the amendment was to cut off at once or excommunicate from the fellowship of the church a large number of ministers and people, —

A pamphlet greatly trumpeted by the enemies of the church, had been published in Scotland some time before the meeting of Synod in 1834, by a person who had been an elder in the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of Paisley, but who had embraced Millenarian views, and had given the Church Courts in Scotland immense trouble for a number of years. Many of the pretended scruples of Mr. Nevin were offered in the very words of this pamphlet, and, even in one or two instances, its gross historical blunders were adopted by him. His exceptions respecting the Acts of Assembly, also, were frequently presented to Synod afterwards in an enlarged form, by Messrs. Paul, Alexander, & Co.

\* See Dr. Henry's speech at Synod, as reported in the *Newsletter*.

than which nothing could be more distant from the words and spirit of the amendment. Dr. Henry, however, was the chief advocate of American defection. With singular but characteristic inconsistency, he argued in favour of the Christian and moral character of the United States Government, even while moving the adoption of resolutions which explicitly condemned the American constitution, as "atheistical, infidel, unchristian, and immoral." This inconsistency, so apparent as to be matter of observation and laughter, even to some who were friendly to the New Light views, served a double purpose. It served to deceive the church here, in leading them to imagine that, by supporting resolutions, which in point of doctrine exhibited a faithful testimony against unscriptural and immoral civil constitutions, Dr. Henry and his friends were sound in the faith. While to the innovators and schismatics in the American church, it discovered that their own lax and liberal sentiments in relation to the United States Government, and their aspersions of the faithful brethren in America, met with strenuous support, or devoted imitation by their friends in the Irish Reformed Synod. To show how far liberal views had gained ground in the Covenanting Church in this country, and to gratify the American New Light allies with a specimen of Irish eloquence, Dr. Henry's speech, which moved the adoption of a declaration, that was in express opposition to the sentiments it put forward, was carefully reported in the newspapers.\* It is unnecessary to comment upon such proceedings. The man who could thus set up a plea for a civil system, which both in its constitution and administration is glaringly opposed to the scriptural model, for which our church has always contended,—the man who could argue for a government being entitled to be considered Christian, which the church had all along condemned as unscriptural, infidel, and immoral, surely gave evidence sufficiently clear, that he had abandoned the testimony of the church; and the only wonder now is that he was allowed to utter such New Light novelties on the floor of Synod, without reprimand or rebuke. Never before had there been proclaimed in open Synod such an obvious abandonment of Reformation principle; and we believe the only reason why the sentiments uttered by Drs. Henry and Paul were not at once condemned, was the overweening desire of the court to avoid disputes, and their unwillingness to infer that any among them had so widely departed from principles to which they had vowed solemn adherence.

The case of Mr. Nevin again came before Synod at this meeting. Instead of entering into a judicial investigation of his exceptions against the Testimony, through tenderness towards him, and to preserve, if possible, good agreement in the church, and among the members of Synod, the matter was considered in private: and much time was spent in hearing his statements, and receiving and giving explanations. The fathers and brethren, who were anxious to preserve the testimony inviolate, and at the same time to prevent dangerous innovation, proposed to Mr. Nevin various questions, carefully

\* The theatrical gestures and rhetorical flourishes with which the Dr. delivered this memorable speech, were in good keeping with the line of reasoning which he employed, and the whole *matter* and *manner* of it formed a curious illustration of the powers conferred by a newly obtained American D.D. through the influence of new light friends.



prepared, on several articles of the principles of the church, for the purpose of ascertaining what were his real sentiments, before they would agree to take any steps towards his ordination. It may suffice to say, that these inquiries were answered with more or less explicitness. While Mr. Nevin did not openly avow any thing contradictory to the doctrine of the Standards, he was careful on some points either to offer vague replies, or to refer to explanations, which were themselves understood in different senses on subjects that had been in dispute. It deserves to be mentioned, that the ministers of the Eastern Presbytery addressed no question whatever to Mr. Nevin; and though his former conduct had given just reason of suspicion, and they were bound, as much as any member of Synod, to prevent the entrance into the ministry of a person who made exceptions to the Testimony, and offered a loose subscription to the formula, they appeared to be perfectly satisfied with his principles and conduct. The other members of Synod, still acting upon the principle of putting the most candid construction upon every statement, and desirous of preserving peace and unity, after the replies and explanations given, either professed themselves satisfied, or said they were not dissatisfied with Mr. Nevin's statements and explanations; and it was therefore ultimately agreed, without any marked dissent, to authorize the taking of steps for his ordination,—it being expressly understood, and indeed declared, that after what had transpired, he should, at the time of ordination, receive the formula in the usual way. We shall afterwards see how this agreement was observed by Mr. Nevin, and the part which members of the Eastern Presbytery took in defending his violation of the compact with the Synod. Meanwhile, it must be apparent, that at the meeting of Synod in Derry, Dr. Paul and his friends gave plain indication of the spirit for which they have long been distinguished,—opposing the testimony of the church,—disregarding its order,—and under the mask of gentleness and liberality, attempting to pave the way for disunion and disorder, in relation both to the ministry and fellowship of the church.

#### SECTION IV.

*More open attempts of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery to promote innovation and propagate their New Light sentiments. — State of Civil and Ecclesiastical Society at this period. — Voluntaryism. — Violent attacks upon the Westminster Confession, and upon those who pleaded in its behalf. — The pamphlets entitled, "The Dens' Theology Humbug," and "Persecution Sanctioned by the Westminster Divines," — their approbation of Dr. Paul's principles and contendings, and his concern in the circulation of the latter. — "The Signs of the Times," or "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving," published by Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery; — this anti-covenanting, politico-religious and flippant pamphlet, briefly noticed.*

Thus far, since the Synod of 1833, the attempts of Dr. Paul and his friends against the testimony and order of the church, were in a great measure covert or indirect. But from the meeting of Synod in 1835,



they commenced a series of movements, which must be regarded as systematic and virulent attacks upon the principles of a Covenanting profession; and which, had they been successful, or unresisted, must have speedily issued in the removal of the church from her former basis of fellowship. It should seem that the innovating faction now began to be sensible that, in a peaceful state of the church, their schemes could not succeed. The elders and people who attended the two last meetings of Synod, were more and more persuaded that their object was to undermine the church's profession; and they themselves must have felt that the members of the church generally had no relish for their new light sentiments. Some creatures, it has been said, are born to live in the fire, or to delight in muddy waters, and if they are removed from their proper element, they either become extinct, or they sink into visible decay. Whether there be any thing analagous to this in the temperament of those that have recently declined the authority of Synod, and maligned the church, we wait not to inquire; but certain it is that about the period of which we are speaking, they began to give clear indication that they felt, that by adhering openly to the pacific settlement of 1833, their hopes of success in the church were very faint, and they actively commenced such a course of procedure, as they must have known would lead to collision of sentiment, embroil the peace, and break the unity of the church.

*Certain recent political events and consequent excitements favourable to the Innovators.*

There were various movements, at this period, in political and religious society throughout the land, that indicated to persons like Dr. Paul and his *liberal* brethren, who could watch their opportunity, and turn to their own advantage the follies or passions of others, that the time was favourable for the avowal of loose principles, and for attempting to draw the church into the vortex of political partizanship,—and should any resist this temptation, of exposing them to public reproach and indignation. The Popish Emancipation Act of 1829, and the Reform measure of a later date, soon produced their genuine fruits. The government of the nation was in the hands of men regardless of scriptural principle, but pretending great respect for freedom and equal rights. Popery and Infidelity were on the increase. The mass of the people appeared to be actuated by an insatiable desire of change;—ancient principles and institutions were regarded as ill-adapted to the genius of an age of inquiry and freedom;—and men unscrupulously laid aside the profession which they had once solemnly made; while those who pleaded for good old Protestant principle on a scriptural ground, were sure to be exposed to unmeasured opposition and reproach. Some years, also, before the period of which we are speaking, the *Voluntary* agitation commenced in Scotland, and the attempt was made about this time to import it into the North of Ireland, as a grand remedy for purifying the church, and curing the disorders of civil society. Fixing upon acknowledged and manifold evils in existing ecclesiastical establishments, the abettors of Voluntaryism aimed at something far beyond the mere correction of abuses, or

the removal of state-endowments from the church. They denounced all connexion between church and state as unjust and oppressive. They represented governments and rulers, in their official capacity, as having nothing to do with religion. They never attempted to exhibit the unscriptural nature of the systems of doctrine or order, from which they would withhold state support, inasmuch as they urged its withdrawal from all, and evidently made no account of the distinction between truth and error. In fact, their reasoning ultimately led to infidelity, however some, who ranged themselves under the Voluntary banner, were unconscious of a tendency so disastrous.

A party of this character, aiming at the subversion of the present order of things in church and state, were naturally disposed to encourage innovation, and to court alliance from any quarter,—and especially to hail defection from the Westminster Standards and the British Covenants, which, beyond all question, hold forth prominently the duty of civil rulers to afford national countenance and support to the true religion. Both political and ecclesiastical movements in society, therefore, afforded encouragement to schemes of innovation; and the abandonment of principle, together with the spirit of rancorous opposition to those who held fast their profession, seemed a sure passport to popular favour and applause. Of these circumstances, Dr. Paul and his coadjutors well knew how to avail themselves, and the principles and character of the church were held by them in small estimation, when weighed against the reputation and other advantages which they might gain, by pandering to the taste of the parties to which we have alluded. It is not necessary to affirm that they proposed this as their only or principal object, in the course which they adopted. It is sufficient to state, that their writings and proceedings gave high satisfaction to those who unscrupulously vilified the Westminster Standards, and spurned at a scriptural basis of civil government, and received their warmest praises,—while it is presumed that they themselves were sagacious enough to anticipate that this might be the result of their persevering exertions to remove the ancient landmarks.

### *Attacks on the Westminster Confession.*

The year 1835, and part of 1836, were signalised in the North of Ireland by various keen and embittered assaults on the Westminster Standards, their venerable compilers, and all who honestly adhere to them in the present day; and by several active movements for the purpose of holding up to indignation some great principles taught in them, especially respecting the national countenance and support of true religion, and the duty of civil rulers with regard to religion and the church of Christ. These subjects, it will readily be perceived, have an intimate bearing upon the profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Although not at liberty to identify themselves with either of the great political parties, nor with those, on the one hand, who plead for the continuance of existing ecclesiastical establishments, or with those who, on the other, deny that nations and civil rulers are under any obligation to ex-



tend special official favour and support to the Church of Christ, Covenanters, as holding the principles of the Second Reformation, and maintaining the perpetual obligation of the British Covenants, could not view with indifference these movements. To a person in any degree acquainted with the history of the Scottish Reformation, it must be completely evident that the Reformers laboured strenuously to establish, as an essential part of their system, the harmonious co-operation of a reformed State with a reformed Church, in maintaining truth and piety, and repressing falsehood and irreligion. This principle, after countless struggles and costly sacrifices, willingly tendered for its attainment, became ascendant at the memorable era of the Second Reformation, from 1638 to 1649, and was embodied in the solemn vows of the nation. These Federal Deeds assume the doctrine of an Establishment so fundamentally, that lay it aside, and they are deprived of half their meaning. They tender the national faith for the upholding of a pure establishment, which, through the good hand of God, had been set up; and they most unequivocally bind men, in civil authority, of whatever class, to employ their official power and resources to sustain the true religion professed, and to discountenance and eradicate dangerous error and false worship.

The attacks upon the Westminster Confession, and the *Voluntary* movements, evidently aimed to remove a principal cornerstone of the glorious fabric of the Reformation, and besides contributed to help forward the latitudinarianism and insidious infidelity that mournfully characterise the present age. The share which Dr. Paul and other members of the Eastern Presbytery had in some of these movements, and the notorious reciprocation of kindly offices between them and the assailants of the Westminster Standards, discover their treachery. It is to us wholly inconceivable how any Covenanter, honestly determined to hold fast the standards of the church, could regard the efforts of the avowed enemies of the Confession, and the declared principles of the *Voluntaries*, otherwise than with marked detestation and abhorrence. And such an alliance as at this time existed between them was but too plain a proof, that those who have declined the Synod's authority were mightily pleased with the virulent attacks made on the principles and character of our Reforming fathers.

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*The pamphlets entitled, "The Dens' Theology Humbug," and "Persecution sanctioned by the Westminster Divines."*

A pamphlet was issued from the Belfast press in 1835, entitled, "*The Dens' Theology Humbug*," purporting to be by "a member of the General Synod of Ulster," the object of which was, to show that the Westminster Standards, the Church of Scotland in her reforming and purest times, — John Knox, Samuel Rutherford, and other distinguished reformers, the leading Divines of the Synod of Ulster, who were contending for reformation, and the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, who were opposed to Dr. Paul, were all chargeable with intolerance and persecution as well as Peter Dens and the Church of Rome. Some time after, another pamphlet, also by a "member of the

Synod of Ulster," and bearing evidence of being from the same pen, was published, with the title, "*Persecution sanctioned by the Westminster Divines.*" In this the writer attempted, by perversions and forced constructions,—by confounding truth with error,—and by *ex parte* historical statements, to prove not only that the Westminster Standards teach persecuting doctrine, but also that their compilers, and those who sanctioned them at first, actually exemplified persecution in their conduct. A principal design of these pamphlets was, by exciting abhorrence against the venerable Westminster Confession and eminent Reformers, and those who wished to hold fast the truths once attained, to counteract the powerful effect likely to ensue on the full adoption of the Westminster Confession by the Synod of Ulster. Besides, in entire keeping with the well-known policy of Jesuits, the writer laboured to represent those who at present maintain the principles of the Westminster Confession in so odious a light, that their principles would at once be rejected, and their characters regarded with indignation by the community. Dr. Paul and his party were praised for their enlightenment and liberality, while, of course, the Reformed Synod and the Editor of the *Covenanter* came in for a full share of obloquy and vituperation. Only they had this satisfaction, that the dishonest reviler placed them in such good company as Knox, Rutherford, the Westminster Divines, the Reforming Assemblies and martyrs of a former day, and such distinguished men as Chalmers, Cooke, and others, who had been instrumental in freeing the Church of Scotland from the tyranny of *Moderation*, and the Synod of Ulster from the incubus of Arianism. We would not be understood as asserting or even insinuating that Dr. Paul or his friends instigated or lent any aid to the composition of these slanderous pamphlets; but certain it is, that by their conduct, they seemed to regard the author of them as an ally in the war of extermination against their brethren, and in their boasted attempts to banish bigotry and persecution from the world. Dr. Paul's keenest partisans within the church, have not hesitated openly to reiterate the groundless charge of the anonymous pamphleteer, and to declare that the Westminster Divines not only taught persecuting principles, but actually persecuted. The pamphlet entitled "*Persecution sanctioned by the Westminster Divines,*" had considerable circulation amongst them; nay more, evidence can be produced that the Doctor himself engaged in the dignified avocation of hawking it, and that he actually sold, after recommending, it in Belfast! It deserves to be observed, moreover, that in all the newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, which noticed the discussions in the Reformed Synod, and which permitted no opportunity to pass without a thrust at the Westminster Standards, Dr. Paul was lauded for his liberality, and that he was claimed by the writers as on their side. As far as we know, he never in any instance refused the incense of their adulation, nor offered a single disclaimer in vindication of the aspersed standards of the church.\* With those who

\* From Dr. Paul's fondness of figuring in the newspapers, this silence was the more significant, showing at least that he did not spurn the alliance of those whose trade was to consign the doctrinal symbols of the Reformed Churches to eternal infamy.



had an opportunity of knowing Dr. Paul's sentiments, or of noticing his proceedings, this conduct excited no surprise. The malignant pamphleteer, who is generally suspected to be a certain intimate associate of Dr. Paul, had only done openly what he had been labouring to effect under a cover. He charged the Reformers and Westminster Divines directly with intolerance and persecution, and Dr. Paul had done the same; with this difference, that he had deemed it more convenient, for obvious reasons, to assail those who hold the doctrine of the Westminster Divines on the subjects of the magistrate's power than the Divines themselves. As he proceeded, however, in his attacks upon the distinctive articles of the Scottish Reformation, he has waxed bolder, and has spoken out more plainly; and in the *Declinature* and other papers issued since they seceded from Synod, Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery have actually represented the Reformers as persecutors on principle,—and have thus fully and undisguisedly adopted the reasoning of the pamphleteer to which we have referred. Cherishing, therefore, similar views with this reviler of the Westminster Standards, it was not strange that they should lend a helping hand to exhibit the venerable doctrinal symbols of the Presbyterian Church in these countries in the most odious light. But the fact of such assistance being rendered by men who were resting under the most solemn vows to retain these symbols, and who still wished simple people to believe that they held fast the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, must, with all candid and conscientious persons, stamp their character and conduct as deserving of the strongest reprobation.

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*“Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving, or ‘Signs of the Times,’ emitted by the Eastern Presbytery.”*

At the close of 1835, Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters favoured the public with another specimen of their reckless disregard of the peace of the church, of their departure from Covenanted principles and usages, and of their attempts to precipitate the church into the arena of low party politics. This was the publication of a pamphlet, entitled, “CAUSES OF FASTING AND THANKSGIVING,” or, “Signs of the Times,” by the “*Eastern Presbytery*,” which, whether we consider the occasion that called it forth, or the sentiments contained in it, is as remarkable a production as any that the annals of innovation can furnish. For a number of years they had prevented, as they did afterwards till the period when they declined the Synod's authority, the publication of *Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving*, although various members of Synod remonstrated on this subject, and the members of the church earnestly desired the emission of such documents.\* The ostensible reason offered by

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\* There is too much reason to ascribe the opposition in Synod to the publication of *Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving*, to the circumstance that Dr. Paul and his liberal brethren of the East, felt hurt at the full and faithful exposure of the evils of Roman Catholic Emancipation, which was made in the Committee's *Causes of Fasting for 1830*, which were prepared by the Rev. James Smyth. When the proposal was made and carried in Synod in 1829, to introduce the subject of Popish Emancipation, as a cause of fasting, into the summary, Messrs. Paul and Alexander stoutly

members of the Eastern Presbytery against the publication of Causes, was, that if they were prepared and published by a committee of Synod, in the interval between the annual meetings of the supreme judicatory, they could not be considered the Synod's causes. It is evident that this objection furnished no sufficient reason for keeping back such summaries, however it may have affected the mode of their preparation. We shall afterwards see how the Eastern Presbytery practically refuted their own argument, when they had ends of their own to answer. Was the objection to Causes, published under the sanction of a committee composed of members from the four Presbyteries, really put forward on constitutional grounds, or did it not rather arise from the feeling that the intimidation and tyranny which the Eastern Presbytery had once exercised in the Synod, and throughout the church, were now at an end? The candid reader will judge, when he is informed that the same members who put it forward had themselves, for many years, acted on committees, who had in this way emitted Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving; and that one of these summaries, that for 1823, is, with the monotony of the cuckoo note, perpetually brought forward by Dr. Paul, as the deed of Synod; and what is more amazing still, a deed of Synod renouncing one of the doctrines of their own Standards! But of this contemptible and dishonest shift, more again.

At the Synod in Derry, when the subject of the publication of Summaries of Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving was under consideration, it was agreed that,—“For the present year, Presbyteries and Sessions may prepare Causes for the use of the people in their bounds,”\*—it being generally understood, as in former cases, that such Summaries might be used, but not published. The reason for such a restriction is obvious. If unity and uniformity were to be preserved, then clearly the representative assembly of the whole church, or at least a limited committee, to which they would delegate powers for this purpose, required to be consulted in a matter of this kind; and whatever specialities in particular places might furnish reasons of humiliation or thanksgiving, which it might be proper for Sessions or Presbyteries to notice in Summaries for the use of their own members, it is evident that these could not, with propriety, be published, or circulated throughout the church, without being likewise submitted for a similar sanction. The present divided state of the church required particular cau-

opposed it, and an elder, who was a near relative of one of these gentlemen, and who argued on the same side, said that there were some present who might think the measure of Catholic Emancipation rather a cause of thanksgiving than of fasting! Notwithstanding this opposition, the general voice of Synod was that a full exhibition of the evils of the measure should be made in the Causes, which was accordingly done. This honest and seasonable protest against a great step of national defection, rendered the Causes peculiarly acceptable throughout the church, and more copies of them, it is believed, were circulated than of any causes of fasting or thanksgiving that had preceded them. However, an open and honest declaration of covenanting principle, such as this, could not but be disagreeable to persons of such *liberal* sentiments as Dr. Paul and his friends, as it was most obnoxious to the political partisans with whom they associated.

\* Minutes of Synod for 1835, p. 6.



tion; \* and least of all was it to be expected that such a course of procedure would be taken by the Eastern Presbytery, whose members had for a number of years argued against the emission of Causes, under the sanction of a committee composed of members from each of the Presbyteries. If such a committee were incompetent to perform this task, much more a body, from which representatives from more than three-fourths of the Synod would of course be excluded, and which were known to differ in sentiment in some important points from their brethren. Was not the course which the Eastern Presbytery adopted, like an open declaration, that they were sensible that the sentiments which they were about to obtrude on the church, and the public, could not receive the sanction of the Supreme Judicatory, and that they would act for themselves, and seek applause or gain, from the liberal or irreligious throughout the community, spurning proper ecclesiastical control, and in violation and contempt of the brotherly covenant?

Whatever objections lay against the manner of publishing these Causes, the *matter* contained in them was much more objectionable.† Nothing at all resembling this production, either in language, or sentiment, or spirit, had ever before been emitted by any Judicatory of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or we might almost say, of any other church in existence. It was truly a publication *sui generis*; and the infamy of desecrating a solemn occasion, by employing it for the pastoral direction and guidance of the flocks committed to their care, and of sending it forth for Voluntary political purposes, will perpetually belong to the Eastern Presbytery. In a sketch like the present, it would be inexpedient to offer a full analysis, or review, of the "Causes of Fasting, or Thanksgiving," of which Dr. Paul was the writer, and which appeared bearing the *imprimatur*, and high ecclesiastical sanction of the Eastern Presbytery. In another pamphlet, for which we have been preparing materials, which will embrace a variety of matters, that must now necessarily be altogether omitted, or but briefly touched at, we may advert more fully to this subject; meanwhile, a few specimens of the sentiment, language, and spirit of the pamphlet will suffice to show our readers with

\* It is easy to see what disorder and confusion would have followed the adoption, by other parties in the church, of the course which was pursued in this instance by the Eastern Presbytery. What if some Sessions had prepared and published Causes of Fasting, and had introduced what they felt to be principal grounds of confession and lamentation,—Dr. Paul's errors,—his vilifying the church,—representing Knox, Rutherford, the Westminster Divines, our fathers at Auchinsburgh, not to say living witnesses, as persecutors, bigots, intolerant, &c.,—and this without censure or reproof! How would this have appeared? And yet it must be obvious that they had just as good a right to do this, as the Eastern Presbytery had to publish separate Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving on this occasion,—with this difference too, that they would have been maintaining the truth and opposing defection, whereas Dr. Paul was giving currency to slander, error, and party politics.

† The "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving" by the Eastern Presbytery, were read from the pulpits of the different congregations under the care of the Presbytery, with the exception of Baliesmill. The reading of some parts of them excited smiling and even laughter in portions of the audience,—and this in the house of God, and in a worshipping assembly convened on a very solemn occasion! The more pious members, we have reason to know, heard the document read with a mixture of surprise and sorrow.

what kind of light the innovators of the East designed to reform the Church, and illuminate society.

It is always to be remembered, that this pamphlet came before the public as an *Ecclesiastical document*, emitted by a court constituted in the name of the church's glorious Head, and that it was provided as a help to one of the most solemn services of the sanctuary, to be used by the members of the church, when they were to be employed in confessing their sins before God, when they were called to rend their hearts, and not their garments, or when engaged in rendering a tribute of thanksgiving to the Lord for all his benefits to the church or the nation. These "Causes," the slightest inspection will convince any person, *were wholly unfitting such an occasion*. Instead of being a summary either of reasons for fasting or thanksgiving, they are, in truth, a politico-religious pamphlet, issued to support the cause of Voluntaryism and Radicalism; and being the judicial document of an ecclesiastical court, they cannot be regarded otherwise, than as a prostitution of its powers, to serve a low party purpose. Seasons of annual fasting and thanksgiving, in the Covenanting Church, have usually been regarded by her members as times of peculiar solemnity, in which congregations, and families, and individuals have felt themselves called upon to mourn apart, or have brought spiritual sacrifices to God's altar, in thankful acknowledgment of temporal and spiritual mercies. A principal design of these institutions is, that the assembled worshippers may review the Lord's dealings with themselves, and may be humbled, or grateful in the Divine presence, according to the chastisements, or benefits, which they have received from the Lord's hands. When, at such a season, public evils or national sins are enumerated either in causes of fasting, or in the services of the sanctuary, they are viewed in the light of the word of God and the testimony of the church; and there has frequently been put forward a faithful protest against the present civil, or ecclesiastical constitution and administration, such as is becoming witnesses for the Scottish Covenanted Reformation to offer. In vain do we look for any such views in the "*Signs of the Times*." They contain abundant declamation about *Tithe* and *Regium Donum*; they pourtray in the darkest colours real or imaginary evils that flow from these imposts; they eulogise, in the most unqualified terms, the measures of the present Whig-radical administration;—but they contain hardly the least acknowledgment of individual or relative sins. They bring forward nothing that has a tendency to produce contrition in the worshipper. They deal almost exclusively with certain evils, about which Voluntaries and Infidels loudly declaim, while the great matters of practical godliness are overlooked, and the "law and testimony" that were left in Israel are scarcely ever mentioned.\*

\* We have already observed that in none of Dr. Paul's writings, as far as we know, is there brought forward a single distinctive principle of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Is this silence to be ascribed to the circumstance that the Dr. had ceased to hold the principles of the Reformation Testimony, before he became an author; or to his desire to retain the favour of certain parties, political or ecclesiastical, with whom, he well knew, the principles of a faithful testimony are peculiarly offensive?



The whole strain of the pamphlet is moreover *ungodly*, and the *language employed is often low and degrading*. Thus, speaking of Episcopalians, and of the royal supremacy, in page 5, Dr. Paul and the Presbytery say, in a style worthy of Cobbett, but how suitable to a *day of fasting* the reader will judge,—“The Apostle Paul says, ‘I suffer not a woman to speak in the church.’ Nay, but say the advocates of prelacy, *we* will suffer her to speak in the church. We will suffer her not only to *speak* but to *rule* in the church; aye, and we will suffer her to be head of the church,” &c. In the same page, we have another choice specimen of Dr. Paul’s dignity of style:—“One year has only elapsed, since ten mitres were *blown away by one puff of the British Parliament!*” (The italics are ours.) Again, in page 11, perverting the Scripture statement about “Kings being nursing fathers to the church,” he illustrates the injustice of civil rulers supporting one sect, while others are denied state emoluments, by a father distributing a portion to some of his children at the expense of the others,—and uses the following classical and tasteful expressions:—“Were we to heap clothes on these favourite sons, and muffle them so that they would neither be able to work nor to walk, nor to bear the slightest puff of wind; and were he, for this purpose, to strip the younger children naked, and expose them to all the inclemencies of the weather,—what kind of a nursing father would he be? And were such a father to exhort these children to live in love and peace, could any thing be more absurd or preposterous?”\* In page 15, we have the following eloquent pun: “The Established Church of Ireland has been usually denominated the *High Church*, but this is a *gross misnomer*,—she is the *low church*. There never was a church so low as she is at present.”

At page 20, the Tories, a political party, are thus spoken of:—“*Good, pious souls*, how conscientious they are!” (The italics are ours.) And in the note, p. 86, they are again honoured with the same derisive epithet. In p. 36, they are said to have been “*mute as fishes*,” when expensive wars were carried on, on the continent; and in the same passage, the unworthy motive of retaining the “golden cup” is represented as all that actuates Protestants in sounding an alarm against the inroads of Popery. We hold the statement to be entirely unfair. It may suit the purposes of radicals and Voluntaries, who seem to regard with special pleasure those political measures, which contribute to the advancement of the empire of Antichrist, to give such a representation; but its injustice must be apparent to all who are acquainted with the movements of the day, and who value scriptural truth. However some mere political Protestants may be led on such a ground to raise the no-popery cry, it is utterly unfair to represent this as the only or principal ground of alarm to the Protestant community in general. Is this in reality all the reason of the present opposition of Protestants to

\* It were easy to shew the inapplicability of the low ludicrous image of a father muffling his children to suffocation, to the case under consideration, but our concern at present is with the style,—and how low the taste of those with whom Dr. Paul’s writings are favourites, when such reasoning can please them, need not be told. Is the last sentence of the above extract an apology for civil disturbance, in order to get rid of state endowments?—if it is not, what can be its meaning?

the advancement of Popery? Is there no cause of alarm to genuine Protestants in the rapid and unheard of progress of Antichristian delusion? If Dr. Paul thinks so, he is in strange ignorance of the present workings of the mystery of iniquity; if he knows otherwise, he must stand convicted in this instance of dishonesty, employing the same language as infidels and liberals use, in helping forward the schemes of the interested partizans of Rome.

In page 38, the Dr., in his zeal to apologise for the present British rulers, appears to us to use language that is profane. "Will you tell your Maker," he asks, "that if he had employed Covenanters, Seceders, or orthodox Presbyterians, you would have thanked him; but because he has employed Infidels and Papists, you feel yourselves under no obligations?" And not to multiply examples of vulgarity in language, which would scarcely be tolerated in the veriest political pamphlet, in p. 35, an interpretation is offered of a Scripture passage (Psalm lxvi. 3), which is nothing less than a reckless misapplication of Sacred Scripture. Dr. Paul having explained the expression,—“Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee,” to mean, “Shall lie unto thee,” applies it to what he terms the lying and hypocritical professions of attachment to reform of those whom he calls “the enemies of civil and religious liberty;” by whom he understands those who cannot co-operate in carrying forward the measures of the present unprincipled Whig-radical administration. One can hardly contemplate without a shudder the impiety and blasphemy involved in this interpretation. It puts the Whig ministry in the place of Christ,—and for the Gospel substitutes the Reform Bill! The ablest expositors, it is hardly necessary to remark, have referred this prediction to the effect of the Gospel in the first ages of Christianity, when, through the power of miracles, and the judgments of God on Jews and Gentiles, numbers feigned submission to the Redeemer without any change of heart. The new lights, however, of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, have dispelled the obscurities of former expositors, and the radiance of the Nineteenth Century\* has reflected from ancient prophecy a halo of glory upon the doings of a band of semi-popish, infidel and immoral statesmen, while it has covered with midnight gloom all who protest against their wicked and headlong measures! To be serious, the perversion of Holy Scripture in this instance, and in others that might be adduced from the “*Signs of the Times*,” is so gross and awful, that it cannot fail to be matter of sincere sorrow, and can only be accounted for on the principle, that those who make light of solemn vows, and pursue a course of defection, readily pervert the word of inspiration itself in furtherance of their divisive and innovating practices.

The pamphlet throughout deals in *misrepresentation and exaggeration*. In it the truth is either suppressed, or stated in con-

\* Dr. Paul has always been accustomed in his speeches, pamphlets, newspaper communications, &c. to boast of the light of the nineteenth century; some of his own interpretations of Scripture, and his lax and crude views of the church's testimony, furnish a curious exemplification of this *ignis fatuus* illumination.



nexion with principles that are essentially wrong, or applied improperly ; and measures are unsparingly praised, which, tried by a scriptural standard, are radically defective, and of mischievous tendency. Thus Tithes and Regium Donum are represented as occasioning the poverty of Ireland,—causing a large portion of the country to remain uncultivated,—corrupting the church by errors and heresies, and the principal barriers which have prevented the progress of the Reformation in Ireland, &c. Regium Donum is spoken of as the main pillar of the tithe system, and as causing the crimes and bloodshed in the South of Ireland. The established clergy are spoken of as “ *one day hunting a fox, and the next hunting their own parishioners, and shooting them as dogs for non-payment of tithes.*”

Now, almost all the statements made on this subject are palpably and grossly exaggerated. Exceptionable as are Tithe and Regium Donum, we must demur against their being charged with all the evils which Dr. Paul has enumerated. There are other causes more potent than either Tithe or Regium Donum in operation, causing the poverty of Ireland, preventing its cultivation, and producing the assassinations and wholesale murders of the South and West,—and Dr. Paul cannot be freed from the charge of bearing false witness, when he has overlooked them. Popery, with its numerous holidays, heavy exactions and priestly domination, is far more intimately connected with the oppression and degradation of Ireland, than any of the causes which have been assigned ; and yet Dr. Paul never hints at this overwhelming evil. The reason is obvious. Those for whom he seems chiefly to have written, see little evil in Popery,—they are indifferent to scriptural truth ; and because the abettors of Romish idolatry and delusion help them to the attainment of their selfish ends, they studiously keep out of view the enormities of the system to which they are pledged, and readily contribute their aid to its political ascendancy. Where, we may be permitted to inquire, has a single instance of the fine-drawn picture of “ *hunting a fox, and shooting their own parishioners,*” been exhibited ? If the Dr. cannot show one, then we must set down his well-turned period as an unfounded slander on the established clergy of this country, not a few of whom are devoted and godly men.\*

The Scottish Voluntaries, attacking the Presbyterian Establishment, are spoken of in terms of commendation ; whereas their principal aim, as Dr. Paul well knows, is to overthrow Ecclesiastical Establishments altogether, and thus to uproot a fundamental principle of the covenanted reformation.

The instances of gross misstatement and misrepresentation, contained in this pamphlet, are indeed so numerous, that our space will hardly admit of the most passing notice. Thus, at p. 23, the writer speaks of some “ *reformed churches reviewing their creeds*

\* There could be no accusation more weighty brought against ministers of religion, than their “ *one day hunting foxes, and the next hunting their own parishioners, and shooting them as dogs.*” Men that could act thus would be monsters in human shape.—Not even the priests of paganism are chargeable with crimes more heinous. Dr. Paul, in bringing forward this foul charge against the established clergy of this country, has equalled in virulence and slander popish priests and demagogues, who have urged on infuriated mobs for their assassination.

every year," and as altering and amending them, and offers this as a plea for innovation. We ask, when and where was this frequent review, and alteration of creeds exemplified in any reformed church, after a scriptural standard had been adopted, and the church had come into a settled condition? In our researches in ecclesiastical history, we have not been able to discover an instance of this kind;—some rays of Dr. Paul's new light might assist our optics in the investigation. Civil and Religious Liberty is, throughout these "Causes," used as a watchword, which the most unscriptural parties,—Papists, Arians, and Infidels, employ, and even the assassins of the South of Ireland are said in one place to be "fighting its battles."\* Papists are generally termed throughout the pamphlet "Catholics," a name to which they have no proper claim; and notwithstanding all that is said of the evils of State endowments, there is no protest raised against the iniquity of the present Government in liberally endowing Popish Bishoprics, Romish Seminaries, and the Popish Priesthood in the Colonies. It is unnecessary to remark, that a fraternization of this kind is entirely alien to the spirit and principles of the Whigs of olden time. The Covenanters of Scotland and the Puritans of England utterly rejected such a confederation; and the myrmidons of Antichrist are so far from fighting the battles of liberty, that it is not many years since even an eloquent Arian leader† publicly declared, that if the Popish Demagogue obtained his object, he with his family would speedily leave the country, as he would consider it no longer safe for them to remain. Dr. Paul speaks of "Fasts being lately appointed previous to the third centenary of the Reformation."‡ We ask, when or where? We know of commemoration services having taken place, but we have not heard of any *fasts* having been observed. We believe none took place; but the liberal Doctor of the East can coin facts which have no existence, as he can readily ascribe to an old light Covenanter, sentiments which he never dreamed of entertaining.

In proof of the *suppression of facts*, and the praising of evil measures, we might refer to the second part of the pamphlet—the "Causes of Thanksgiving"—*passim*. This is, in truth, a laboured apology and defence of various public acts of the present corrupt government. It contains little else, and the other matter is plainly secondary to this as the principal design. No hired political pamphleteer could have laboured in the service with more devotion. The unscriptural, anti-covenanting character of the present British rulers and administration, is entirely kept out of view;—their measures are warmly eulogised—a jubilee and national thanksgiving are called for, on account of the success of their

\* See "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving," p. 31. With as much reason might the Indian savage, with his tomahawk and scalping knife, slaying or torturing his victim with savage delight, or the Thugs in India, who make murder their trade, be said to be fighting the battles of civil and religious liberty, as those who, in the south and west of this unhappy country, are the dupes of an interested and intolerant priesthood, and of aspiring demagogues, and who are the implacable enemies of every thing Protestant.

† Dr. Montgomery.

‡ Causes, p. 23.



administration.\* They are spoken of as almost introducing the Millennium, establishing peace and liberty throughout the world, and proclaiming "justice between church and church, nation and nation, as well as between man and man."† Reform in Parliament—Corporation Reform—Retrenchment—Free Discussion, including, of course, full freedom to the Atheist, Deist, Socialist—these are measures that are praised in the highest terms—and yet it is notorious, that none of those changes called Reforms were adopted on scriptural grounds, while several of them have operated, and will operate, to give power to popery and infidelity. The *Whigs* of the present day are represented as almost *immaculate*, and they are spoken of as identified with the Whigs of the olden time, whereas they are entirely opposed to them both in principle and spirit. Roman Catholics are said to be ashamed of persecuting principles. We ask,—where is the evidence of this, either in the writings or conduct of those who direct the policy of Antichrist? Political declaimers or Jesuits ~~avow~~ this to serve a purpose, but the proof has yet to be submitted; though often demanded, it never has been presented, while the motto of Rome—"Semper Eadem,"—and her unrepealed statute book, bear unequivocal evidence that the allegation is without a foundation. Throughout the whole inspired volume, we never have the slightest intimation of Popery being reformed, and in the book of Revelation, Antichrist is always represented as unchanged and unreformed, from its rise till its final overthrow. The great system, with its abettors and supporters, is exhibited as the "Mother of Harlots"—having a whore's forehead, refusing to be ashamed, and as continuing to war against the truth, and drink the blood of the saints, until desolation from the presence of the Almighty shall overwhelm her. It need not be told how opposed are all such views to the dogmas of those who declaim about the altered and improved spirit of Popery.

Dr. Paul even identifies himself with the class of *Radical Reformers*. He is not a *finality man*. Like the Irish agitator, whose cause he faithfully serves in this instance, he regards reform measures already past, as valuable chiefly because they are "installments of still more sweeping changes."‡

It is needless to pursue this exposure farther, or offer comments on the extravagant panegyrics which the writer bestows on an infidel, popish, and truckling ministry. We might ask,—is there in this pamphlet the least hint that scriptural qualifications are indispensable to civil office in a Christian nation? Is there any attempt to apply the measuring rod of the divine word to political men and measures? Is there a word said about the utter neglect of legis-

\* See Causes of Thanksgiving, p. 37.

† If the present British rulers are renowned for doing "justice between church and church," why do they not re-establish the covenanted constitution as it existed from 1638 to 1649. This is the system which, according to the late venerable Dr. Mc'Crie, has the "proper claim by every right, divine and human, to be presently professed by all classes in these lands." Would Dr. Paul like to see the Covenanted Church re-established and endowed as it was under the Second Reformation? If so, one would find some breathing of the wish in some part of his writings. If he would, some of his modes of reasoning against endowments, and against magistratical coercion, would never have appeared before the public.

‡ See Causes of Thanksgiving, p. 35.

ing to prevent Sabbath profanation, or even of the present British rulers passing enactments, as in the railroad bills, to authorise extensive desecration of the Lord's day? \* On these and other topics of similar importance, Dr. Paul is entirely silent; and it is but too evident that the design of the writer was to gain the praises and support of a political party, by the deliberate exclusion of scriptural principles. The enemies of truth knew well how to appreciate the sacrifice. In this country, the ministers of the church were grieved, while Popish priests rejoiced, and engaged in the active circulation of "The Signs of the Times." The Voluntaries and Radicals had a large impression of the pamphlet printed and circulated, and they honoured the author with special marks of favour. Its appearance was hailed with joy by the Voluntaries of Scotland, and afforded them grounds of triumph in their war against the doctrine of a national establishment of religion. It was represented as the production of the Irish Reformed Presbyterian Synod; † and employed at public meetings, and on other fit occasions, in opposing important articles of the Westminster Confession. On the other hand, the faithful adherents of a covenanted testimony, in Scotland as well as in this country, regarded the publication of this pamphlet with feelings of alarm, and sorrow, and shame. They were grieved that any who were called brethren, should make common cause with the declared enemies of reformation principles. The ministers of the Reformed Synod in Scotland, generally and strongly disapproved of the "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving," and it all but escaped a public judicial condemnation, in one of the Presbyteries of that judicatory. It was felt to be deplorable throughout the church, that such a melancholy sample should be given of the decay of practical godliness, among the ministers and people of the Eastern Presbytery, and, at the same time, of their readiness to take part in the political strife that was dividing the nation, in which both parties were sufficiently far from a scriptural standard. Never was the adage of the Latin poet more applicable, than to the conduct of the Eastern Presbytery, in relation to the "Signs of the Times"—"*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" The publication of such a pamphlet by an ecclesiastical body was downright infatuation, and it was doubly so, coming from the Eastern Presbytery, occupying the position that they did at this juncture. The writer speaks what he knows to have been the feeling of many of his brethren in the ministry, in relation to the "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving." They considered themselves disgraced by being in connexion with a Presbytery that could prostitute its powers in publishing such a pamphlet,—and they felt it a stain on the whole church, that it did not instantly receive judicial condemnation. That the "Causes" were received by Congregations of the Eastern Presbytery, or by any of the members of the church,

\* In allusion to the clause in the railway bills about carrying the mail on the Sabbath day.

† This appeared a natural enough inference, as it was sanctioned by a Presbytery; and persons at a distance could hardly understand how a Presbytery would venture on issuing a document, containing sentiments of which the Synod disapproved.



without marked disapprobation and disgust, is a melancholy instance of the progress of declension. The time was when no Presbytery, or minister, would have dared to present such a document to a congregation of Covenanters. The religious spirit, however, of the people had degenerated with the defection of the ministers, otherwise they would never have suffered such an outrage upon sound principle and devotional feelings,—such a burlesque upon a solemn religious ordinance. The publication of this pamphlet, at this particular time, was fraught with more than ordinary danger to the adherents of a covenanted testimony. A large portion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America had, in an hour of temptation, been led to abandon their former standing, by approving of the United States Government, and by taking part in electioneering politics. From the enlargement of certain political rights, which the measures of Government had granted in recent years, there was danger nearer home, both in this country and in Scotland, of members of the church being led away from former steadfastness. The “Signs of the Times,” instead of raising a barrier against the threatened evil, served to help forward political agitation, and was actually employed in some quarters for this purpose. Its whole spirit and tendency were to draw Covenanters into connexion, and active co-operation with one of the evil political parties of the day. In it, Dr. Paul overlooks altogether the reformation attainments of a former period,—hallowed in the remembrance and affections of every genuine Presbyterian,—and talks in high sounding terms of a “Third Reformation” approaching, more glorious than the second; and he and the Presbytery seem to consider themselves as distinguished instruments for its introduction. We have only to observe, in conclusion, that if the “Signs of the Times” be a specimen of this third reformation, then, indeed, we may look forward to it, as an era of *radical* and *singular* changes. Our seasons of fasting, and thanksgiving will be greatly different from what they were in our fathers’ days. The worshipping assemblies, instead of being affected with the exhibition of the Lord’s controversy for their own sins, and for the abominations that are done in the land, will be excited to laughter by the low sarcasms and vulgar flippancies contained in Summaries of Causes. Instead of contrition for their own sins, they will indulge in derision of others; and instead of protesting against unscriptural systems and rulers, they will associate with the worst political parties, and become the ready panegyrists of their measures. The church, in short, will assume a position in relation to political parties and principles, such as her testimony never contemplated. But whether the piety, faithfulness, and zeal of her members will be increased under the ascendancy of the new principles, is very problematical.

## SECTION V.

*Farther attacks upon the Testimony of the Church.*—"Christian Liberator," a *Voluntary, Independent Periodical.*—*Concern of Members of the Eastern Presbytery in its publication and circulation.*—*Its ignorant, malevolent assaults upon the Westminster Confession.*—*Voluntary movements in Belfast.*—*Share which Ministers and Elders of the Eastern Presbytery had in these attempts to overthrow the fabric of the Reformation.*—*Synod of 1836.*—*Memorial of the Congregation of Knockbracken, and proceedings of Synod thereupon.*

Next in order of the systematic attacks upon the Covenanted Reformation, to which the gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery lent themselves, may be mentioned the *Voluntary publications* which about this time issued from the Belfast press, and *Voluntary movements* in the North of Ireland, which attracted considerable notoriety. About the commencement of the year 1835, a periodical, bearing the plausible and pompous title of the "*Christian Liberator*," designed "to advocate, on scriptural principles, the cause of civil and religious liberty," was started, for the purpose of aiding the cause of Voluntaryism, which in Scotland and England had been putting forth the most violent efforts to overthrow ancient established institutions. The Editor of this magazine was an Independent minister,—an agitator in politics on the radical side,—and one whose conduct did not endear him to the well disposed of the community. Its contributors and supporters were chiefly Independents, and Voluntaries in religion, and radicals in politics. The first year of the existence of this periodical passed, without its attracting almost any notice. In literary execution, and as a professedly religious journal, it was worse than contemptible. It scarcely ever contained a single article, however small, in which any of the great articles of the Gospel was exhibited, or vindicated. It was entirely devoid of matter that tended to promote practical religion, and although it promised to record the progress of Christian benevolence, it was all but exclusively taken up with putting forward Independency, and Voluntary principles; and like magazines of the same species, published in other places, it was pervaded by an ungodly spirit, and by perversions and misrepresentations of the principles of the founders, and confessors of the Reformed churches. Feeling that their labours were not attracting the publicity which they coveted, the conductors of this periodical, and others who wished to introduce the reign of Voluntaryism, at the commencement of the year 1836, enlarged their plan, and endeavoured to draw in new auxiliaries in their crusade, against the principle of an Establishment of religion, and other collateral doctrines of the Reformation. A public meeting was held in Belfast, in the evening, designated a *soirée*, which was attended by a considerable number of radicals and Voluntaries of different religious names, and at which were present Drs. Paul and Henry, and Rev. Mr. Alexander, with several elders and members of the Covenanting church, who were of kindred



sentiments with them, and who were friendly to the importation of Voluntaryism into this country. At this meeting, *inter alia*, the proposal for enlarging the "*Christian Liberator*" was brought forward,—an introductory paper for the second volume was read and approved, containing anti-establishment, and otherwise erroneous doctrines,—and a Committee was appointed to take measures for diffusing these principles, and for conducting the periodical. The ministers of the Eastern Presbytery, who were present, made speeches on the occasion; the measures proposed were reported to have received the concurrence of the whole assembly; and it was declared in the public papers, and afterwards in the "*Liberator*," that members of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod were members of the Committee. \*

It is not necessary that we should, at any length, consider the sentiments, and reasoning that were advanced in the monthly effusions of the "*Liberator*." Suffice it to say, that they were directed against what the writers termed the "compulsory principle," and were in favour of the voluntary theory. They were distinguished by hostility to the Westminster Confession, and and to those who maintained its doctrines; and were not less remarkable for their bitterness, than for the flippancy, and ignorance which they betrayed. Thus the pamphlet entitled the "Dens' Theology Humbug," already noticed, was lauded in the highest terms, and represented as "*having proved to a demonstration its leading position*,"—"showing from the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and other authorised documents, that John Knox and our Protestant Reformers, together with Assemblies of the Kirk, and even the National Kirk of Scotland itself, have all sanctioned the intolerant principles ascribed to Peter Dens."† The words of the Confession are quoted elsewhere, and directly contradicted in terms of contumely and reproach. Thus the "*Liberator*" declared,\*—in reference to the sentiment of the Westminster Confession (ch. xxiii. art. 3.), "In opposition to this sentiment, we maintain that a civil ruler hath not authority from God to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies be suppressed,—all corruption and abuses in worship and discipline prevented and reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed." As a specimen of the ignorant ridicule and contempt which the writers in the "*Liberator*," or its sapient editor, attempted to pour upon the Confession, the following remarks, contained in a note on this passage, deserve to be mentioned:—

"Could any of our readers 'guess' what *scriptural proof* in favour of this position (the Magistrate calling Synods, &c.,) is produced by the venerable Assembly of Westminster Divines? Some commandment from the lips of the King and Head of the

\* See *Christian Liberator*, No. 4, vol. ii.

† See cover of No. 4, vol. ii, of the "*Christian Liberator*." It is added, "This pamphlet will produce in certain circles no ordinary sensation, and will tend to prevent the enlightened members of the Synod of Ulster from committing themselves to all and every part of the Westminster Confession."

‡ *Christian Liberator*, No. 5, vol. ii. p. 107.

church? Some express intimation of Jehovah's will? No, verily. The only proof they could find in the New Testament, was Matt. ii. 4, when Herod is said to have convened the magicians to ascertain where Christ should be born! An ungodly King had political power to assemble his infidel magicians, *ergo*, magistrates have authority from God to call Synods, of Christian ministers!" The utter ignorance of Scripture, and the stupid incapacity for apprehending the plainest argument betrayed in this passage, need no exposure.\* With such writers, it was easy to see that the Westminster Confession had little to fear; but this did not excuse their malevolence towards its doctrines, or the duplicity and treachery of those who co-operated with them, or who supported them, while they still professed to hold the sentiments of the Confession.

We might easily adduce a number of other passages from the "*Liberator*," to show the reckless manner, in which the Voluntary organ endeavoured to overthrow the grand principle of the Westminster Standards, and of the British Covenants, respecting a national establishment of religion; but this is unnecessary. From the specimen we have given, the spirit of the whole may be ascertained. The "*Liberator*" was characterised by similar ignorance, petulance, and self-conceit throughout; and by the most barefaced perversions of arguments in favour of National Establishments, and by the continual exhibition of bitterness, and rancour against those who employ them, the conductors aimed to raze to the ground the costly fabric which our forefathers erected, and to raise upon its ruins their own system of anarchy, and national infidelity. To a person who knew any thing of the principles, or usages of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, it must have appeared not a little singular, that with such a publication, or its conductors, any who professed adherence to the Covenanted Standard should be, in any way, connected. It was an alliance into which an honest Covenanter would not have thought for a moment of entering. Yet, as we have said, *three Covenanting ministers*, all of the Eastern Presbytery, sanctioned by their presence the introductory paper of the "*Liberator*;"† and members of the Covenanting Synod were said to

\* In a subsequent number, the editor attempted a correction of the gross and ridiculous blunder about the "*magicians*," but without withdrawing the sneer against the Confession, and he only exposed still farther his confirmed ignorance, and venomous hostility to the Westminster Standards.

† In the "*Liberator*" (Vol. II. p. 23.) it is said concerning the Introductory paper,—"the principles embodied in that article obtained the warm and unanimous approbation of the gentlemen present,"—and among the "*gentlemen present*," who addressed the meeting, were "Rev. John Paul, of Carrickfergus, Rev. W. Henry, D.D., Newtownards; Rev. John Alexander, Belfast,"—and in the same place it is farther said, that before the meeting was closed, the following resolutions were passed:—"That a periodical, conducted on the principles stated in the leading article of the forthcoming number of the '*Christian Liberator*,' this evening read to us, merits the support of all the friends of civil and religious liberty; and *we pledge ourselves to promote the extensive circulation of that journal*." (The italics are ours.) "That the most cordial thanks of this meeting be presented to the Rev. John Paul of Carrickfergus, and the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, for their able and unanswerable pamphlet, ex-



belong to the Committee of the "*Belfast Voluntary Church Society*," which was appointed to diffuse the principles of which this periodical was the avowed organ.\* Dr. Paul wrote several papers in the "*Liberator*," which were published under his signature.† He and his writings and party were always praised in

posing 'the Evils and Dangers of the present System of Tithes and Regium Donum in Ireland.' " And in p. 22, of the same number of the "*Liberator*," in a fulsome notice of the "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving" by the Eastern Presbytery, it is declared,—“To the influence of this pamphlet (the 'Causes,') do we owe the large and influential Committee, under whose auspices this periodical now appears.” The reader will now be prepared to judge for himself, without comment from us, what part Dr. Paul and other members of the Eastern Presbytery had in the publication, and “extensive circulation” of the malignant slanders of the "*Liberator*" against the Westminster Confession, the Reformers, and those who at present maintain their principles and vindicate their character.

The sentiments of the *Introductory paper*, although cautiously expressed, were in many points objectionable, and such as no sound Covenanter could subscribe. Our space only admits of the most passing notice. The “gentlemen present” say (p. 2), “We rejoice to think that the sentiment is spreading through the world with the rapidity of light, that man is no more accountable to *his fellow* for the articles of his religious belief, than for the height of his stature, or the colour of his skin.” Then, according to this sapient doctrine of the Independent minister, Voluntaries, and members of the Eastern Presbytery, a minister is not accountable to his congregation for the doctrine he preaches,—ecclesiastical courts can take no cognizance of the religious belief of ministers, elders, or people,—and civil rulers are in no wise accountable to the people for the profession of religion which they make, or whether they make any profession at all. This sentiment may do for Infidels or Voluntaries of the present day,—but it sounds strange indeed from the lips of professing Covenanting ministers. Throughout this paper, the “gentlemen present” deny entirely the propriety or duty of giving state-endowment to the church in any circumstances,—arguing, that thus the church will be “encumbered and fettered,”—that rulers may, out of their private resources,—that is, not as rulers at all,—bestow endowments,—and that to “tax a divided community for the support of a sect,” as contrary to “the fixed and settled laws” of the Christian dispensation. That all this *pure Voluntarism* is in utter opposition to the principles for which our Reforming forefathers contended, both under the First and Second reforming periods, and to the plain declarations of the Second Book of Discipline, need not be told, to any person acquainted, in the smallest degree, with the history of the reformation in these lands.

“\* The Committee includes Episcopalians, Presbyterians of the Synod of Ulster,—of the Secession Synod,—of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and the original Seceding Synod; also Independents and Wesleyan Methodists.”—*Christian Liberator*. Vol. ii. No. 4. p. 83. The names of the Committee, however, were never published. Was this concealment intentional, that when the courts of the church would take cognizance of the matter, they might not readily obtain proof? However this be, the fact shows that the abettors of Voluntarism in the Reformed Synod were ashamed or afraid publicly to declare their confederation with the avowed enemies of the distinctive principles which the Synod maintained,—and at the same time, their readiness, in a treacherous, underhand way, to advance a system which aimed undisguisedly to overthrow utterly the costly attainments of the Reformation.

† In a paper, in the first number, vol. ii. of the "*Liberator*," on the "*Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian Tithe Systems*," by a Presbyterian Minister,—which the *Northern Whig*, a good authority, ascribes to Dr. Paul,—and in another paper, to which the name of "John Paul" was affixed, containing reasons why "Covenanters object to Regium Donum," the statements are unfounded and absurd, the arguments sophistical, and the reasoning weak. The reasons against accepting *Regium Donum* are political party reasons, and the Covenanters' reason is altogether left out. In the first of these papers (p. 9, at the foot), the giving of State-support to the church, in any case, is ~~declared~~ as contrary to the law of the New Testament. This is just the grand Voluntary assumption, as destitute of all solid proof

the most fulsome terms; while those who differed from him in the Reformed Synod enjoyed the honour of its vituperation.\* And this was not all. The "*Christian Liberator*" was circulated in congregations of the Eastern Presbytery, and recommended to the unsuspecting people from the pulpit, quite in accordance with the pledge given by Messrs. Paul, Henry, and Alexander, at the meeting in Belfast, "to promote the extensive circulation of this journal,"† and simple-minded persons of some note, and members of the church at a distance, were entrapped to become agents for its circulation. Alarmed afterwards by the unmasked and scurrilous attacks of this low organ of Voluntaryism upon the Westminster Standards, and aroused by the exposure of its principles which was made in the Reformed Synod,‡ to which we shall hereafter advert, some of these acknowledged they had been misled, and gave up the work of circulating slanders on the church's testimony, not, however, till the steadfast members of the church had seen their weakness, and deplored their inconsistency. Now, what are we to think of the part which Dr. Paul and his friends of the Eastern Presbytery took in the publication and circulation of the "*Christian Liberator*?"|| Did it not unquestionably discover a disposition to abandon the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian

as other parts of the Voluntary theory.—And besides, the Dr. makes such assertions as these,—“The Jews paid tithes, but paid no rents,”—“The Jewish dispensation was a severe dispensation, but no such severity in this. If the Jews were negligent in paying tithe, God, and not the *Civil Magistrate*, redressed the grievance.” These, and other specimens of crude assertions which might be given, contain statements which Dr. Paul can readily make at any time, and which his admirers can easily swallow,—but a satisfactory proof he will find a much more difficult matter.

\* When the venerable Dr. Symington, the Theological professor of the Scottish Reformed Synod, appeared as a delegate at the Irish Synod in 1836, he delivered an address, exceedingly admired by all right-headed men, in which the question of Establishments and Voluntaryism was referred to in a masterly manner. He was abused afterwards in the *Voluntary Church Magazine*, in a style of indecent vulgarity, his speech commented upon, and the principles of the church, which he powerfully advocated, were belied and represented as intolerant, and as “meeting in the most harmonious brotherhood” with the dogmas of popery. The *Liberator* duly copied a part of this article from its Scottish coadjutor into its pages, and while it spoke of Dr. Symington's remarks as “peculiarly offensive to every candid and impartial mind,” it entitled “Drs. Paul, Henry,” & Co. “noble-minded men,” and exempted them from all participation in Dr. Symington and the Synod's intolerance and bigotry.

† See *Christian Liberator*, No. 1, vol. ii. p. 23.

‡ In 1836.

|| When the subject of the *Voluntary movements* in Belfast and of the *Liberator* was mentioned in the Synod of 1836, Dr. Paul alleged that all the concern which he had in the matter was accepting an invitation to drink a “cup of tea” with an evening party in Belfast!!! And this was to cover the sanction which he gave to the liberalism of the introductory paper which was read, and *warmly and unanimously* approved; and the pledge which, with others, he gave “to promote the extensive circulation” of the *Liberator*! O shame, where is thy blush? O truth, honesty, candour—how little are such virtues esteemed by innovators and Voluntaries! Dr. Paul, on another occasion, said the *Covenanters* had misrepresented him, in saying he was “checked in his Voluntary movements,” and he alleged he had not been checked in movements Voluntary, or involuntary, for that he had no concern with the Voluntary movements referred to. After the quotations which we have given from the *Liberator*, we leave the public to judge of the truth of this declaration.



Church, when they lent the sanction of their names and influence to parties who were engaged in attacking it in the most virulent and undisguised manner? The Christian public will know, after this, how to appreciate the declarations which the gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery all along made in the ecclesiastical courts and elsewhere, of their unwavering attachment to the church's Standards.\*

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*Voluntary Discussion in Belfast, in 1836.*

Soon after the steps which we have noticed had been taken for the circulation of the "*Christian Liberator*," a grand attempt was made for commencing the Voluntary crusade on an extended scale, in the North of Ireland. A public meeting was proposed to be held in Belfast on the 16th and 17th of March, 1836, for this object, and several distinguished Scottish clergymen of the United Secession body, who had taken a leading position in the Voluntary agitation, were invited to attend. Accordingly, a meeting was held, many of the active promoters of which were known to be ultra-liberals in politics,—of very different and opposing sentiments in religion,—and some of them little given to any defined religious profession; and it was addressed by Dr. Ritchie of Edinburgh, a gentleman who sought, as he obtained considerable notoriety by his advocacy of Voluntary principles, and by his conflicts and defeats in this cause; and it was also harangued by several other ministers, of different religious denominations. As we are only concerned with this meeting, so far as it had a leaning upon the profession or conduct of members of the Covenanting Church, or upon discussions which had been carried on, for some time, within the Synod, we forbear to make any particular mention of the proceedings, or of the signal defeat which the champion of Voluntaryism, and all his associates, Covenanting and others, sustained. It may suffice to state that this victory was complete, as it was unanticipated by the promoters of the meeting, and its effects were so felt by the abettors of Voluntaryism in this country, that they have never since discovered much inclination to court public discussion. The Rev. John Alexander, who has all along been the faithful ally of Dr. Paul, appeared on the platform, in company with the advocates of Voluntaryism, and delivered a speech upon the occasion. While he spoke of not being opposed to the doctrine of Establishments *in the abstract* (as he termed it), he argued, that maintaining the right of the civil ruler to establish the truth, would go to establish the right of a Mahometan or Arian ruler to establish their system; and he contended against a legalised support being given to the church, as implying compulsion in religion, which he regarded as unscriptural and anti-christian. We offer no remarks upon these arguments, strange indeed, as com-

\* It is even alleged, and we have heard that Dr. Paul himself beat up for subscribers for the *Liberator*, and importuned persons connected with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in Belfast, to become members of the Voluntary committee. This need not be wondered at, when he was pledged by a previous resolution "to promote the extensive circulation" of the *Liberator*.

ing from the lips of a professedly Covenanting minister. Mr. Alexander, we believe, complained afterwards that his speech had been, in some points, improperly reported in one of the newspapers,—yet the sentiments which we have noticed, were put forward in reports manufactured by his friends of the *Voluntary* party. With the sentiments which Mr. Alexander uttered, however, we have at present less concern. The fact of his coming forward on the occasion, proved his friendly leaning to the Voluntary movement. His co-operation was sought at the meeting for the purpose of promoting Voluntaryism; and it will hardly be pretended that Mr. Alexander was so ignorant of what were the avowed principles of the party, or of what was passing in society, as not to know their anti-covenanting and unscriptural character. His presence, and the part which he acted, enabled the Voluntaries, both here and in Scotland, to boast that ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were their faithful allies, in their warfare against the grand principles of the Scottish Reformation. One of Mr. Alexander's elders, who generally attended the meeting of Synod, and several other elders and members of the church, residing in Belfast, who were avowedly favourable to Dr. Paul's views, also contributed their active assistance to the advocates of Voluntaryism.

Had even the sentiments uttered by Mr. Alexander been unexceptionable, how could he, and elders and members of the church, who aided the Voluntaries, be excused in sanctioning, by their presence and silence, the loose and dangerous sentiments which the champion of Voluntaryism uttered at this meeting? Here the plea of ignorance respecting the nature and principles of the Voluntary cause could not avail them. There were arguments employed and statements made by Dr. Ritchie, which sounded not a little strange in the ears of Presbyterians of sound principle. Thus he gloried in the circumstance that he had not subscribed the Westminster Confession on his entering the ministry, and boasted of the manner of subscription in the Secession Church in Scotland, namely, subscribing the Confession, except so far as it does contain, or is conceived to contain, intolerant or persecuting principles. He opposed the Solemn League and Covenant,—ridiculed the idea of an Establishment in the abstract, and argued against an establishment of religion as unscriptural, and wrong in any circumstances,—and he plainly and strongly objected against a national recognition of the Christian Sabbath, and against the Civil Magistrate doing any thing whatever, in his official capacity, to prevent Sabbath desecration. It must appear not a little extraordinary that such sentiments were listened to by professed Covenanters, who sat on the same platform, or who contributed their aid to the Voluntary cause at the meeting, and that they expressed no dissent from them, nor afterwards, in any public way, their disapprobation of them. Did not such silence afford grounds for the enemies of truth boasting that the ministers and members of the Covenanting Church were with them in their assaults upon established and valuable principles? And what could the simple-minded and faithful members of the church, who had not become enamoured of the light of the nineteenth century, think, when they heard that such



sentiments as we have noticed, were put forward at the introduction of Voluntaryism, and that a minister of their own, and elders of the church, had lent their active countenance and support? The conduct of these persons was obviously calculated to bring a reproach upon the whole church, to lead to a grievous misapprehension respecting her profession, or to draw her members into an ensnaring connexion with a system which aimed to introduce national infidelity. And the temptation was the more dangerous, that the Voluntaries exposed the evils and sought the removal of some public imposts, such as *Tithe* and *Regium Donum*, which Covenanters held to be wrong, and viewed as oppressive. It was quite natural to overlook the principles involved in the conflict, and the means employed to attain the end, in the anxiety to obtain deliverance from evils, which have served to corrupt the church and mar her independence. Besides, the signal defeat which the abettors of Voluntaryism suffered at this meeting, considered in connexion with the manner in which ministers and elders of the Eastern Presbytery had identified themselves with them, served to sink the church in public estimation, and actually had this effect to a large extent, especially in Belfast and the neighbourhood. This was painfully felt by faithful members of the church in various places, and the desire was expressed, from different quarters, that something should be done to vindicate the church from misconception, and particularly to prevent those who were still acknowledged as ministers, elders or members of the church, from acting in a way that was contradictory to their solemn profession, and detrimental to a testimony for the truth.

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*Synod of 1836.—Memorial from Knockbracken, and measures taken thereupon.*

It was under a feeling of this kind, and from no wish to retaliate for past injuries that had been inflicted on them,\* that the *Congregation of Knockbracken* presented to Synod, at its annual meeting in July, 1836, a Memorial, with the view of arresting the progress of the evils that have been noticed, and of obtaining from the court a solemn and public declaration of the principles of the church, in relation to points in dispute, for the purpose of setting at rest the minds of members, and of vindicating the character of the church from unjust and injurious aspersions. In this paper, the Memorialists expressed "their deep concern to witness, in some quarters, principles avowed, which are opposed to the great doctrine of a National Establishment of the true religion, and which have a tendency to draw the members of the church into an approval of the men and measures of the present civil adminis-

\* The history of the conduct of the Eastern Presbytery towards the congregation of Knockbracken, for a number of years before they became a separate congregation and obtained a pastor, furnishes a melancholy example of the neglect of pastoral care, and of tyranny and oppression. But this, instead of being given in a passing notice, would form the subject of a separate pamphlet. The materials for such a work are at hand in abundance; and if the interests of truth appear to demand it, it may hereafter be given to the public.

tration in these lands." They greatly lamented moreover, "the prevalence of a report that ministers and elders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church had, of late, joined hands with those who impugn the doctrine of a National Establishment of Christianity: and, moreover, ministers of the church had been publicly declared to be engaged in conducting publications, in which portions of our Westminster Standards are directly turned into ridicule, in which sanction is given to gross libels on the Standards and practice of the Reformed Church, and the article of a national establishment of true religion is opposed." Memorialists, in consequence, "earnestly requested Synod to make a public Declaration to the church and the world, of the doctrine of the church respecting the duty of nations and civil rulers, to whom the light of Divine revelation has come, authoritatively to establish the true religion, and to protect and support the church of Christ."

As those who have recently declined the Synod's authority, laboured assiduously to misrepresent the nature and design of this Memorial, and to found a plea for some of their own subsequent gross irregularities, upon the step taken by the congregation of Knockbracken, in presenting it, it seems necessary to make a remark or two, in vindication of the proceedings of the congregation, and to show how little ground of complaint there was furnished on this article.

The subjects referred to in the memorial were matters of deep importance, and such as could not be regarded with indifference by any who valued the Covenanted profession. The publication of the "Causes of Fasting," containing such sentiments as we have noticed,—the circulation of the "*Christian Liberator*" throughout the church,—and the part that ministers and other members of Synod were reported to have taken in it,—the attempts for the establishment of Voluntaryism,—and the public assistance which members of the Eastern Presbytery and their adherents rendered in the enterprise,—were quite sufficient to excite alarm among those who were called to hold fast the truths to which the church had already attained, and to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. The entrance of erroneous principles and of loose practices into the church is like the letting in of waters. If we would be safe from danger, and would not be carried away with the overflowing flood, we must oppose the beginnings; and maintaining the high ground of an uncompromising testimony, we must resist innovation, from whatever quarter. It was in this spirit, and with this design, that the congregation of Knockbracken memorialised the Supreme Judicatory in relation to the matters that have been specified. Besides the concern which they could not but feel, in common with all faithful witnesses for truth, at measures which had a threatening aspect upon the profession of the church,—from their position, near the *centre of these movements*, they were exposed to assaults from those who were bent on innovation, and were often represented as bigots and persecutors, because they could not say a confederacy with the known enemies of our Covenanted uniformity. And it was, besides, particularly distressful to them to be spectators of movements which threatened the removal of the ancient landmarks, and to find it declared



in the public prints, that persons who were resting under the same solemn vows as themselves, and whom they wished to regard as brethren, had become active agents in promoting unscriptural measures of government, and in disseminating within and without the church, anti-covenanting and unscriptural principles. In justice to the cause which they held, and in faithfulness to erring brethren themselves, they could do no less than call the attention of Synod to the matter, and ask them to take order that courses of innovation and defection should be arrested. They were actuated by no vindictive spirit in this case; they desired not even to find the brethren, whom public report had represented as connected with Voluntary publications and movements, guilty. They advanced no charges against them, nor did they seek them to be censured. All they desired was, that the staff of bands might not be broken, and that the church might be freed from the aspersion of having abandoned principle, and joined hands with liberals, infidels, and others who were averse to the doctrines of the Standards and our Covenants, and might be guarded against the insidious and repeated attempts that were made to lead away her members from their distinct standing as witnesses for the whole of the precious attainments of the Second Reformation. This could not be considered, in any sense, as violating the Synod's settlement of 1833. The congregation was reluctantly constrained, in the discharge of a public duty, to call the attention of the court to the writings and proceedings of Dr. Paul and his friends, that were evidently opposed to the resolutions which were then adopted. The Memorialists brought not up a single point which had been in discussion in 1833; it was exclusively in reference to new matter,—new and dangerous principles broached,—and divisive and irregular conduct recently pursued,—that they called for the interference of Synod.

It is unnecessary to detail at length the discussion which took place in Synod, on the presentation of the Knockbracken Memorial. It may suffice to say, that the matters to which it referred were viewed as requiring special and solemn consideration; and the members of the court generally and cordially concurred in the views of the Memorialists respecting the necessity of adopting immediate measures for checking defection, and of satisfying the demands of the people for a public and plain declaration of principle, on subjects that had been in dispute. The Eastern Presbytery laboured with all their might to hinder such a design being carried into effect. They endeavoured to fasten the worst motives on the Memorialists, and to misrepresent the nature of the Memorial, as if it contained slanderous charges against members of Synod, and at the same time overlooked the proper course of ecclesiastical order; while they themselves, in the course of the discussion, threw out such allegations as were directly calculated to injure the character, not only of the Memorialists but of the whole Synod, in public estimation. Thus, Mr. Alexander said that he had been blamed, simply because he would not go “the length of a member of the Synod, who declared that he would drive all Papists into the fire with a pitchfork,” and that he would “take a pistol out of

his pocket, and shoot them on the highway, for the killing of papists was no murder ;”—and he artfully connected this infamous statement with the Memorial from Knockbracken, so as to make the impression that some person connected with the congregation, minister or elder, held such a detestable sentiment.\*

Notwithstanding the Moderator and other members of the court condemned such an allegation, Mr. Alexander persisted in it, and Dr. Paul, so far from resenting the dishonour cast upon the church, supported him in it, and said it could “be proved.” It is now unnecessary to relate how this statement, and others of a similar kind, embodying low gossip, and inflicting a deep wound on the church, made in different discussions by ministers and elders of the Eastern Presbytery, were eagerly seized by an unfriendly press, and employed to excite the worst kind of prejudice against the Covenanting cause and people. This was indeed effected to a considerable extent ; and the gentlemen who brought forward these unsupported allegations, never, in a single instance, seemed to repent of the injury which they had done to the church and the character of their brethren ; but, on the contrary, seized every opportunity to indulge in this vulgar and dishonourable mode of attack, till the practice was publicly condemned by a resolution of Synod, in 1838. Dr. Paul also, in his usual style of declamation, and bravado, and boasting of his own productions, objected against any defence of the principle of a national establishment of religion at the present crisis, as injudicious,—apologised for the murders perpetrated by Romish assassins in the South and West of Ireland,—pleaded for union and co-operation with infidels and persons of latitudinarian sentiments, even in schemes which threatened the testimony of the church,—offered the usual plausible pleas in favour of liberal measures,—threw out his hackneyed allegations of intolerance, and bigotry, and persecution against his opponents, and idly challenged members of the court to answer or discuss the “Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving” emitted by the Eastern Presbytery, when he knew perfectly well that it would have been disorderly at that time to take such a course ;—and then, because no person took up the gauntlet, he complacently shouted a triumph, and pronounced his pamphlet unanswerable !† Dr. Paul, more-

\* “The amount of the charge (in the memorial) was that he (Mr. Alexander) was suspected of being a papist, simply because he would not go the length of a member of that Synod, who declared that he would drive all papists into the fire with a pitchfork.” And again Mr. Alexander said to a member, who expressed indignation at the odious charge which he had advanced, that he was referring “to the expressions about papists, the disapproval of which gave rise to some of the statements made in that document ;” and when asked “what document he was referring to,” he answered, “The memorial from Knockbracken.”—See Report of the proceedings of Synod for 1836, by the special reporter of the Belfast Newsletter, circulated in a pamphlet form by members of the Eastern Presbytery, pp. 22, 24.

It afterwards appeared that the member of Synod to whom Mr. Alexander referred, as having used the obnoxious expressions mentioned in the text, was the Rev. William Gibson, who, at the meeting of Synod in 1838, declared, in the most solemn manner, that he had never given utterance to these statements.

† Report of Proceedings, &c., p. 22.



over, proposed an *amendment*,\* which contained a summary of some of the principal statements that had been brought forward in the "Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving;" and this received the support of all the ministers and elders of the Eastern Presbytery, who afterwards declined the Synod's authority. Notwithstanding the clamour thus raised, and the violent attempts that were made to prevent an orderly course of procedure, the Synod honourably and firmly did its duty. The various matters referred to in the Memorial received due consideration, and the deliverance of the court was as follows:—

"That our religious profession and ordination vows imperatively demand of us, in the present circumstances of the church, a distinct and solemn Declaration, that while we decidedly disapprove of existing civil and ecclesiastical establishments in these lands, we cannot make common cause with any of the political parties of the day, or with such as deny and oppose the principle of a national establishment of the religion of Jesus Christ. That we refer this petition to a Committee of Synod, with an express injunction to endeavour to have in readiness a matured report upon the subjects to which it relates; and that we affectionately beseech and warn all members of this church to abstain from all acts contrary to the spirit of the foregoing declaration."

This Resolution had the cordial support of the whole Synod, with the exception of the members of the Eastern Presbytery, by whom it was violently opposed. Although Dr. Paul's amendment was artfully framed, by mentioning prominently the evils of existing establishments in Britain, and the burdens of Tithe and Regium Donum, and the Doctor in his speech appealed to the elders in his most pathetic style, the Resolution was carried by a majority of *thirteenth* to *eight*, not a single minister or elder of any other Presbytery than the Eastern, voting for the amendment. The Synod thus afforded another practical proof, that they regarded with disapprobation and alarm the new light measures of Dr. Paul and his friends, and that they were resolved faithfully to maintain principle and check divisive courses, despite of the clamour and vituperation by which the Eastern gentlemen, and their satellites of the liberal press laboured to ob-

\* It deserves to be noticed, that in the first resolution of Dr. Paul's amendment he states,—“We believe that a nation, enjoying the light of Divine revelation, is bound, in its national capacity, to embrace and protect the true religion, and to extend to it legal sanction and support.” At first sight, this would seem to inculcate what the advocates of Establishments and of a Covenanted Testimony maintain; and it would even seem to involve the authoritative restraint of the Church's open enemies, such as gross and obstinate heretics and idolaters; but it is only in appearance. The sentiment is artfully expressed, so as to deceive the simple. Dr. Paul pleads, for the *authoritative protection* of the grossest heretics and idolaters, as may be seen by referring to the “*Exposure of Persecution*,” by the Eastern Presbytery, in their remarks on the Synod's Declaration in overture, and in Dr. Paul's letters to the Rev. John Stott. Quere,—Is *authoritative protection* the same as the “simple forbearance” of the “*Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion*,” so often idly quoted by the Dr.? And farther, how can Dr. Paul maintain the *authoritative protection*, and deny the *authoritative toleration* of heretics, idolaters, &c.? It is now quite evident that the first resolution of the amendment was a mere blind, brought forward to serve a purpose.

struct a course of orderly procedure. From the decision of Synod, Dr. Paul and seven other members of the Eastern Presbytery *dissented*, and afterwards assigned reasons, which we may notice in a subsequent place.

As illustrative still further of the spirit of reckless innovation by which Dr. Paul and his party were actuated, may be mentioned the case of the Rev. John Nevin, which led to some discussion at this meeting of Synod. We have related the different steps taken by Synod, to obviate what were put forward as the "*scruples*" of this gentleman, but which were, in reality, his exceptions against several points of the testimony of the church. We have stated, that at the previous annual meeting of Synod in Derry, a length of time was spent on his case; and at the conclusion, the clear understanding was, that he would, at receiving ordination, give his assent and subscription to the Formula in the usual manner. Whether Mr. Nevin distinctly remembered this agreement, and afterwards saw reason to depart from it, or determined from the first not to regard it as binding upon him, we pretend not to say; but at his ordination in Ballymoney, in the Autumn of 1835, which was conducted by members of the Missionary Board, as a Committee of Synod, assisted by other ministers, he utterly set it at nought. On the questions of the Formula being proposed to him, to that respecting the Acts of Assembly, and the Testimony of the Church, he did not, as in the other parts, give a silent assent, but said publicly before the audience, that he was to be understood as assenting to these portions, according to the explanations which he had offered to Synod, or according to the views given in the "*Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion*."\* Several of the more aged and venerable ministers of the church, who took part in the ordination, were much dissatisfied with this unprecedented subscription, and a considerable number of well-minded members of the church, who were likewise present, expressed their dissatisfaction, and regarded it in no other light than as a dangerous innovation. The Committee of Synod, in presenting their report, adverted to the manner in which Mr. Nevin had assented to the Formula, and expressed their regret on account of it. For this they were furiously assailed in the court by Dr. Paul, who argued that the expression of regret in the report should be expunged, and an implied censure be thus cast upon the committee. He and Messrs. Alexander and C. Houston pleaded in favour of Mr. Nevin's mode of receiving the Formula; and Dr. Paul represented subscription without explanation, as it was usually made, and as it had been made, from the organization of the Reformed Presbyterian Church till the present time, as

\* It will be borne in mind that one of Dr. Paul's favourite positions, is that the "*Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion*," *explains away*,—in other words, denies the doctrine of magistral coercion, as clearly taught in the Westminster Confession, and the Act and Testimony. Mr. Nevin, by introducing the *Explanation and Defence*, showed how faithfully he followed his leader, while he conveyed the impression, in all likelihood, not unwillingly, to simple-minded auditors, that the *Explanation and Defence* contained a different view on some articles of the Testimony, from that which had been usually held by candidates hitherto, in entering into the ministry.



leading to implicit faith, and the requiring of it as intolerance,—and, with the classical elegance for which he is remarkable, he likened the ordinary mode of subscription to the bed of Procrustes, as “screwing up candidates to their length (of course of church rulers, whom he thus compared to cruel and unnatural tyrants), if he were too short, and cutting him down if he were too long for its specified dimensions!”\* Dr. Paul, moreover, stigmatised as Popery the sentiment that had been advanced in the *Covenanter*, that after having made vows, a person can claim no right to make inquiry how he may break them!! The Synod sustained the report of the committee, and this condemned Mr. Nevin’s mode of tampering with the Formula, agreeing,—at the suggestion of Dr. Symington and Mr. M’Lachlane, Delegates from the Scottish Reformed Synod, who both strongly deprecated the innovation that had been made, to insert the very words that Mr. Nevin had employed in giving his assent before the public.

#### SECTION VI.

*Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery’s attempts to vilify the fathers of the Church.—Synodical Meeting of 1837.—Petition from Linen-Hall-Street Congregation, Belfast.—Attempt to alter the Terms of Communion by the Eastern Presbytery.—Their odious slanders upon the Covenanters at Auchinsagh, and upon the Church since.—Discussion on the Auchinsagh Renovation.—Independency, division, and anarchy, proposed to be licensed by Dr. Paul in his amendment.—Faithful and Judicious Decision of Synod.—Unpresbyterial and Violent measures of Dr. Paul, and the Eastern faction, to trample under foot the Settlement of 1833, by the introduction of the Loughmourne Memorial.—Adjourned Meeting of Synod at Cullybackey in 1837.—Farther aggressions on the basis of fellowship by the Eastern Presbytery.—Their conduct in relation to the Synod’s Overture, entitled a “Declaration on Civil Government,” &c.*

In passing on to the record of transactions in 1837, it seems necessary to notice briefly the effect of the decisions of the Synod of 1836, on Dr. Paul and his friends. Finding their progress in some measure arrested,—and their conduct virtually condemned, they displayed mortification and chagrin; and instead of acting afterwards in a brotherly manner, they adopted a course which was calculated to trample all order under foot, and which rendered it wholly impracticable to conduct the business of Synod, so as to promote the edification of the church, or to secure the continuance of its unity. Dr. Paul and his adherents were no doubt vexed, and disappointed that the Supreme Judicatory had shown so much attention to the Knockbracken Memorial, especially as they had all along acted, as if they considered the Memorialists as their enemies, and they seemed bent on revenge. This disposition, and a reckless disregard of the received basis of fellowship and order of the church, and of the feelings of its pious

\* See Report of Proceedings, &c., p. 8.

and devoted members, characterised their proceedings from this period till that of their separation.

Among the first matters that claimed the attention of Synod at its regular meeting in Moneymore, was a petition from the Linen-Hall-Street (Mr. Alexander's) Congregation, Belfast, pleading for an alteration of the Fourth Term of Communion, or in other words, for the expunging of the last part of it, which contains an approval of the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinsaugh. The grounds on which this alteration was ostensibly sought, were that the Scottish Reformed Synod had left out the mention of the Auchinsaugh Deed in the Terms of Communion, some years before,—that it is not named in the terms of communion used in the American section of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and that consistency required the Irish Synod to adopt a similar modification.

It deserves here to be remarked, as illustrative of the growing spirit of innovation of Dr. Paul and his party, and of their increasing disregard to the brotherly covenant, that at this time, and for some time before, they refused to take friendly counsel with brethren on this article, or to listen to considerations of expediency or peace. Their object was evidently to bring the more delicate and difficult matters respecting the doctrine, fellowship, or order of the church, into public discussion, that they might thereby expose to unpopularity and reproach, brethren, who were opposed to their loose and innovating opinions and practices,—that they might exhibit parts of the received testimony of the church in the most unfavourable light, and that there might be furnished for the caterers of the newspaper press, with whom Dr. Paul was a favourite, matter to misrepresent and vilify the church. The expunging of the item in the fourth term of communion by the Synod in Scotland, had led to many heartburnings in the Covenanting church in that country. One venerable minister had, in consequence, withdrawn altogether from the Synod, and a number of people scattered throughout several congregations, adhering to him, refused to hold communion with the Synod, or with those who agreed with them respecting the propriety of the alteration in question. The Synod in Ireland, to prevent the occurrence of such unpleasant divisions among their people, and not considering that they had a call in providence to alter or modify the received basis of fellowship, agreed, at an early period, to make no alteration in the fourth term of communion. When this topic, in one shape or other, was presented to Synod, at several subsequent periods, the matter was taken up in the way of friendly conference, in private, and there was a general agreement to make no alteration. All seemed anxious to avoid an expression of sentiment, that would tend to disturb the harmony, which existed between them and the sister Judicatory in Scotland. While they held it inexpedient to make the change, they were satisfied that there was little difference of opinion upon the article in question between them and their Scottish brethren; and by retaining the terms of communion as they had been hitherto used, they gave confidence to numbers of well-affected members of the church, who earnestly desired to walk in the footsteps of the flock. But, for some time previous to this meeting of Synod, Dr. Paul and his friends showed that they were disinclined any longer to follow this pacific course.



In the controversy respecting the power of the civil magistrate; the Editor of the *Covenanter* had adduced the evidence of the Auchinsaugh transaction, to show that his views were accordant with the Covenants National and Solemn League, and with the views of those who had renewed them, and that those of Dr. Paul were plainly opposed to both. Dr. Paul, in his pamphlets or newspaper communications, did not attempt to meet those important allegations, but instead, satisfied himself with resorting to his usual weapon of reproach, while he virtually acknowledged, in one of his publications, that the evidence was clearly against him, by assailing the Auchinsaugh Renovation, and pleading that it should be removed from the terms of communion. The inconsistency and disorder of a minister thus writing against a part of the declared basis of fellowship in the church, to which he himself, as well as others, were at the time pledged, must be apparent to the most inattentive observer. It was, however, a part of the same policy which he had for a long time past been pursuing,—professing to hold the testimony of the church, while he was labouring by every possible method to unsettle the minds of church members, and to exhibit in the most obnoxious light, certain parts of the church's profession. As a piece of the same policy, congregational petitions were got up to urge Synod to make alterations; and instead of showing a willingness to confer on the subject in private, Dr. Paul and other members of the Eastern Presbytery would be satisfied with nothing but public discussion.

The petition from the Belfast congregation had been presented last year, but could not be taken up, for want of time, before the final adjournment of the court.\* According to mutual agreement, it received attention at an early stage of the proceedings. Into a full view of the arguments employed in the discussion it is unnecessary to enter. Suffice it to say, that while the elder and commissioner from the congregation spoke like persons who knew little of the matter, but who were well disposed to follow their teachers, the Four Ministers of the Eastern Presbytery, with Mr. Nevin, discovered every disposition to asperse the names of the faithful and devoted men who covenanted at Auchinsaugh, and to represent the principles of the document, and the spirit and conduct of those who held it fast, in the most disagreeable and abhorrent aspect. They adduced isolated passages respecting the restraint and punishment of idolatry and heresy, and charged upon these intolerance of the worst kind; they referred to the views of the Covenanters of that period about paying taxes,—overlooking altogether the explanations which the church had offered on these points,—

\* As a curious illustration of the way in which many of the people who followed their pastors in these innovating courses were blindly led, it deserves to be mentioned, that while the Commissioner from the Linen-Hall-street congregation laid claim to superior enlightenment, the Petition contained several gross blunders. Thus the fourth terms of communion was incorrectly quoted, and it was said in it that the 23d chapter of the Westminster Confession is limited in the Act of Assembly of 1647, whereas that Act speaks only of a clause in the 31st chapter, and not a word of the 23d chapter! How easily do people believe in the infallibility of the doctors of liberality, even though the plainest facts stand in opposition to their innovating courses!

they laboured to identify the retaining of the clause, with the extreme views and practices of the *Active Testimony* men,—they represented the expunging of the clause as the removal of rubbish from the landmarks,—Dr. Paul charged the whole church, ministers and people, in holding the Auchinsaugh Renovation among the Terms of Communion, as sworn to kill Papists, Arminians, Quakers, &c., every time they sat down at the Lord's table; and he persisted in this foul slander, even after several members had pointed out its injustice, and rejected it with indignation. Throughout the discussion, it was quite apparent that the doctrine of magistratical coercion of gross idolatry, and heresy, in a reformed land, which is clearly taught in the Auchinsaugh Deed, was the grand object of attack,—and the assailants seemed to think that no imputation was foul enough to cast upon those who held this principle.

The measure, too, proposed by Dr. Paul, discovered the progress of new-light doctrines among the party, and the disorder and irregularity in the church which these doctrines and their abettors would license. The motion proposed by Mr. Dick and seconded by Mr. Smyth, was,—“That this Synod do not judge it expedient, at this time, to make any change in the fourth term of communion.” To this, Dr. Paul moved an amendment, which was seconded by Dr. Henry, to the effect that “Each congregation be left to their own discretion, whether they adopt the Scottish alteration, or retain the Irish form of the fourth term of communion.” This was plausibly proposed as the means of producing harmony and reconciliation, while in reality it required the Synod to license division; and to give countenance to conflicting views, and discordant practices. By aspersing the memories and vilifying the principles and spirit of the fathers of the church, men full of faith, who had contended unto blood in behalf of her chartered rights, the innovators aimed to erect a trophy to a false and spurious liberality, and to conform the policy of the church to the course of a declining age. The object of the amendment was, under a false mask, in reality to expunge the Auchinsaugh Renovation, and to license a principle essentially Independent, if not worse. In opposition to the attempt of the Eastern Presbytery to alter the church's basis of fellowship, it was argued that the Scottish Synod, who had had experience of the bitter fruits of agitating the subject, had pronounced the discussion “unnecessary and unprofitable,”—that nothing would be gained by the proposed alteration, while it was evident it would be attended with injurious effects in many instances,—that the passages excepted against in the Auchinsaugh Deed were few in number, and were sufficiently explained by the church in the “Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion,” so as to leave no just room for the allegations that had been made against them,\*—that the arguments for laying aside this deed,

\* “What we chiefly intend by introducing the Auchinsaugh Bond into our Terms, is the approbation of renewing our Covenants, as it was then done, *without overlooking any of the Reformation attainments, either in church or state*; and by giving a faithful testimony against all the defections and prevailing sins in both. But we do not reckon ourselves responsible for every unwary expression which our forefathers have used.”—*Explan. and Def. of Terms, &c., p. 54.*



on the ground of its teaching magistratical coercion, apply equally to the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Act and Testimony,—that the grounds on which the Eastern Presbytery sought the change were altogether different from those on which the Scottish Synod had made the alteration, as they had never objected against a great article running through the church's Standards, nor would they suffer the memories of their forefathers to be vilified,—that the Auchinsaugh deed, rightly understood, taught nothing but what was substantially held forth in the original Covenants, and that we only held it in *consistence* with acknowledging their perpetual obligation, as the Term of Communion states,—that the conduct of our forefathers at Auchinsaugh, in the circumstances in which they were placed, is susceptible of satisfactory vindication, &c.

The members of the Synod,—elders as well as ministers,—seemed to be fully aware of the injurious nature and dangerous consequences of Dr. Paul's amendment; and after a lengthened discussion, in which all present appeared to take a deep interest, the motion was carried, and the amendment rejected by a majority of *twenty-nine* members against *eight*, the minority being, as on former occasions, the ministers and elders of the Eastern Presbytery.\* Another striking proof was thus afforded, that Dr. Paul and his party were alien in principle and spirit to the testimony and practice of the church, and that they were resolved to leave no stone unturned, either to break down the structure, which fathers of deathless memory with holy hands had reared, or if this could not be accomplished, to sink the profession, ministry and membership of the church in public estimation. It is cause of gratitude to Him who walks amidst the golden candlesticks, that these attempts were met by Synod with a firm and faithful resistance, and that the church representative evinced their readiness to endure the opposition and reproach to which their renowned forefathers were subjected, rather than surrender the least article of their invaluable testimony.

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### *Introduction of the Loughmourne Memorial.*

It was not alone in the public proceedings of Synod at this meeting that Dr. Paul and his party discovered their intention of no longer maintaining, in good faith, fellowship with their brethren on the church's established basis of doctrine and discipline, or of preserving any regard to the pacific agreement of 1833. Documents were presented to the Synod in Committee, and notices of future proceedings were given, which plainly indicated their design to trample on all proper Presbyterian order, and to rend the church, in case they could not move the Supreme Judicatory into an ap-

\* The minister and elder of Bailliesmill congregation, then in connexion with the Eastern Presbytery, in these discussions always voted against Dr. Paul and his faction. In this case Mr. Nevin voted for the amendment, so that of the eldership of their own Presbytery, they had only *three votes*, and not one from any other Presbytery.

proval of their New Light sentiments and proceedings. Thus, Mr. Nevin, in the course of the discussion on the Fourth Term of Communion, declared that he meant to propose that the question in the Formula for ordination, which requires Licentiates to approve of the Acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1649, should be expunged for ever, and before the close of the proceedings, he entered on the books a notice of a motion to this effect, to be brought forward at the next annual meeting of Synod.

In the Committee of Bills, Dr. Paul presented a Memorial from his congregation, which shall be afterwards more particularly noticed, in which almost all the doctrinal matters, that had been already discussed before Synod in 1833, were brought forward in the shape of charges against the Editor of the old series of the *Covenanter*, and against his writings; and with the exception of a few matters, manifestly frivolous, there was no allegation in this paper against the new series of the *Covenanter*, then in existence for nearly *four years*. This Memorial itself was a rare specimen of the powers of its reverend author in perversion, and in exciting popular odium. It distorted passages in the works of Mr. Houston,—left out explanatory or qualifying clauses,—in several instances entirely misstated the facts, and, as a matter of course, represented the doctrines taught in the pamphlets referred to, as most odious and abominable. And one thing most worthy of notice was, that several of the passages thus quoted, and always referred to, as exhibiting the intolerant ultra opinions of Mr. Houston, were the very words of the venerable reformers,—Knox, Rutherford, Durham, &c., or of the Standards of the Reformed Church, or expressed their well known sentiments.

Against the licensing of this paper by the Committee of Bills, and its introduction into open Synod, strong objections were offered by those members who were desirous of maintaining the church's testimony, of sustaining Presbyterian order, and of preventing confusion, and the degradation of the church in public estimation. They clearly foresaw, that to open up a discussion which had been already closed, and which the Synod had pronounced "unprofitable and injurious," besides its plain violation of Presbyterian order, would tend to divide the church, alienate members of Synod from each other, and produce evil effects throughout the religious community. It was a plain and palpable breach of the Synod's own agreement; and thus to trample under foot a decision maturely framed, could only have the effect of lessening confidence in the wisdom and firmness of the Synod, and of opening the way to interminable agitation and confusion. The views of the reformers, and of the testimony of the church concerning civil government, cannot be expected to be popular, while the reign of Anti-christ continues, and evil systems are prevailing. Discussion before the public on such topics, among members of the same church, or of the same ecclesiastical court, could only be pleasing to those who rejoiced in the divisions of Reuben, while it could not fail to wound the feelings, and grieve the hearts of such as valued truth and peace. If this were the case generally, much more might it be anticipated that the renewal of a discussion which had already served to draw much odium upon the church, would be attended



by pernicious consequences. Accordingly, several members of Synod, who were called all along to take a prominent part in resisting innovation, strongly opposed the introduction of the Loughmourne Memorial. Dr. Paul and his friends pleaded for it on very slender grounds, but with all tenacity; and, indeed, some such disorderly course was their only hope for success, in their favourite project of gaining popular applause, at the expense of the character and peace of the church. In vain it was argued against them, that it was irregular to renew the discussion of 1833, in the teeth of an express resolution of Synod, in which all parties had acquiesced,—in vain were the injurious consequences, that must result from the measure proposed, and that were afterwards fully realized, pointed out,—in vain were Dr. Paul and his friends solemnly urged to desist from a course which could not fail to expose themselves and injure the church. They remained inflexible,—at one time alleging that the admission of the *Knockbracken Memorial* last year required them to adopt this course in self-defence,\*—again threatening separation, in case the Memorial was rejected, and speaking of the public press doing them justice, if it was refused them by the Synod. The only instance in which Dr. Paul alleged the shadow of a pretext for renewed discussion was, that a notice on the cover of one of the numbers of the new series had spoken of the views advanced on magistracy in the former series, with seeming approbation, and that some of Dr. Paul's arguments, in his speeches or pamphlets, had been apparently referred to in some of the papers of the new series. The Editors showed, convincingly, that the Resolutions of 1833 did not require them to renounce their sentiments, which they firmly held as in accordance with the testimony of the church, but that, through regard to the peace of the church, they had brought forward nothing new on this subject. The notice on the cover was given with the avowed intention of excluding, instead of reviving the controversy, and it related merely to the *principle* of a religious establishment. The arguments to which Dr. Paul alluded had been advanced by others; one especially was a foolish remark, which radical politicians thought very wise, that had been made by the Lord Chancellor; and nothing had been brought forward in the periodical which could fairly be considered as contravening the resolution, that prohibited ministers from writing against each other.

Notwithstanding, at the close of the second lengthened sitting of the committee, the Loughmourne Memorial was, by a very

\* The futility of this plea need hardly be noticed. The cases were in every respect wholly different. The *Knockbracken Memorial* referred to matters, *all of which had occurred since 1833*;—to plain cases of irregularity and defection, and to publications in opposition to the standards of the church; yet it asked for no discussion, nor required any censure to be inflicted. It only sought to arrest the progress of disorder and innovation. The *Loughmourne Memorial*, on the other hand, almost exclusively referred to matters on which the Synod had already decided. It aimed to exhibit principles taught in the Standards of the Church in the most unfavourable light, and its plain and undisguised object was to draw condemnation from the Synod, and much more from the public, upon those members who were opposed to Dr. Paul's tenets and disorderly courses,—to destroy their reputation, and through them to asperse the character and principles of the Reformers, and of the whole church.

small majority, licensed to come before Synod,—several members, even of those who had determinedly opposed it, not voting, lest they should be thought afraid of discussion, or of wishing to prevent Dr. Paul from obtaining the fullest hearing, and some other members voting for its introduction, in the hope of arresting unprofitable discussion at a future stage; or, as they said, foreseeing separation aimed at,\* they would allow Dr. Paul every opportunity of showing his case, and thus take away the ground of complaint, that he could not obtain justice.

It is greatly to be regretted that any members of Synod should have been misled by such views. Bitter experience afterwards proved them to be completely illusory; and the members who either by their votes, or by silence, contributed to license disorder, have themselves to blame for the confusion and reproach which thereby occurred to the church. The subsequent events in connexion with the Loughmourne Memorial served to show, that the only proper course to be taken with those who are bent on innovation, is to adhere closely to scriptural order, despising clamour and reproach; and any other course only leads to confusion, and is followed by other disastrous fruits.

### *Adjourned Meeting of Synod at Cullybackey.*

As a considerable portion of the ordinary business of Synod was left unfinished at the time when it was necessary for the court finally to adjourn, it was agreed to hold an *adjourned meeting* of Synod at Cullybackey, on the 10th of October, this year. The expense, and difficulty of ministers and elders attending a second meeting of Synod in the same year, must, in all justice, be laid to the account of those who were bent on their darling object of advancing their own selfish ends, by opposing and running down the principles and usages, which the Reformed Presbyterian Church had long firmly and invariably maintained. It was, in other words, one of the sacrifices which honest and faithful witnesses were called to make, while resisting an insidious but insatiable spirit of change.

Soon after the constitution of the adjourned Synodical meeting, the remaining matters referred to in the Memorial from the Linen-Hall-street Congregation, came under discussion. Besides the alteration of the Fourth Term of Communion, the petitioners sought that the question in the Formula for ordination, relating to the Acts of Assembly, should be altered according to the Scottish form, although they could not give a correct statement of it; and they moreover inquired whether the *twenty-third* and *thirty-first* chapters of the Westminster Confession are to be received according to the words of the Confession, or according to limitations men-

\* At the close of the discussion on the Auchinsaugh Renovation, Mr. (now Dr.) Staveland observed, in reference to Dr. Paul's allegation, that, by holding the Auchinsaugh Deed, the church, for 150 years, had been swearing to murder Papists, Arminians, &c., every time they went to the Lord's table, that, "If we and our fathers are charged with holding persecuting principles, and if these charges are to be reiterated, it would be better at once to turn our backs on each other and rate. There could be no union or co-operation in this way."



tioned in the Act of Assembly of 1647.\* While petitioners sought an alteration in one of the questions of the Formula, in itself of little consequence, Dr. Paul and his party clearly discovered their ulterior design,—to vilify the character and proceedings of our covenanted ancestors, and by assailing one article of the received basis of ecclesiastical fellowship after another, to thrust out a definite subscription, and to provide for the introduction of their own loose and deceptive interpretations. They held up to reproach some of the Acts in which the doctrine of magistratical coercion is declared,†—represented the church as requiring candidates to approve of acts which had not been printed, and which consequently they could not have seen,—and Dr. Paul declaimed, as his manner is, about implicit faith, and tyranny exercised over young men's consciences. Against these allegations, those who valued the character of the Synod, and were desirous of holding fast the Standard which had been committed to them, showed that the question in the Formula had always been understood to refer to the printed acts that had been published in a collection, which is in circulation throughout the church, and that these are the acts confirming and approving the reformation. But to show that they were resolved not to be led into hasty and ill-digested measures of change or innovation,—while they desired to make such improvements as, not affecting principle, were seen to be desirable,—in order to secure accuracy and uniformity in the expressions of the Formula, it was agreed,—“That a committee be appointed to revise the phraseology of our Formula, proposed to ministers and elders at ordination.” The inaccuracy of the last statement in the petition, which related to the Westminster Confession, having been pointed out, it followed as a matter of course, that in adopting the Confession, the *twenty-third* chapter is to be taken in the plain and obvious sense of the words, and not according to a limitation of it which had no existence.

The *Declaration* respecting Civil Government and National Establishments, the preparation of which was entrusted to a committee in 1836, in the deliverance on the Memorial from Knockbracken, was introduced to Synod on the second day of the proceedings. Dr. Paul and his brethren vehemently opposed the taking of the Declaration under consideration. Their objections were of the most frivolous kind, brought forward evidently for the purpose of protracting the business; and when their futility and irrelevancy were shown, Dr. Henry proposed, as a *dernier resort*,

\* Did not the terms of the Memorial imply that the adherents of Dr. Paul felt that the Confession, in the plain and obvious meaning of the expression, was directly opposed to their New Light sentiments? The delusion, too, of representing the limitation in the Act of 1647, as *explaining away* the doctrine of magistratical coercion, taught in the 23d chapter, to which it does not refer, is another acknowledgment that that doctrine, as propounded in the Confession, was too hard to be digested, and that its opponents could only hope to succeed by deception and abuse.

† In approving of the Acts of Assembly, the church never required more than an approbation of the Acts ratifying and approving of the Reformation, as they have been printed and collected into a volume; and this approbation refers to the great principles held forth in these Acts, and does not apply to particular modes of application. It is moreover to the Acts of Assembly, not of the Parliament, that the question in the Formula refers.

“ That the Declaration should be sent to the sessions of the different congregations, in connexion with the church, for consideration.” The object in this *manœuvre* was to get rid of the Declaration at once, and by sending it to the inferior judicatories, contrary to all precedent, previously to its being considered by Synod, to increase the confusion, and unsettle still farther the minds of the people. The Synod, however, were not, by clamour, to be led into a violation of the plainest principles of Presbyterian order, or to neglect an important duty to which they were loudly called, at this crisis; and accordingly, notwithstanding the dissent of Drs. Paul and Henry, and Messrs. Alexander and C. Houston, the Synod, on the motion of two worthy elders,\* agreed to consider the Declaration, with the view of preparing it as an Overture, to be afterwards transmitted to the different Sessions, and to the sister Synods in Scotland and America.

As the Declaration had been carefully framed, after a minute and diligent inspection of the Standard's, and other approved documents of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Britain and America,—embracing those subjects, and those subjects alone, that the Synod had directed to be noticed, and was, in many cases, expressed in the very words of the authorised writings of the church, it might have been expected that there would be little diversity of sentiment among the members of Synod concerning it. Intended to declare, in an abstract form, the doctrines which the Reformed Church had always held on subjects that had been in dispute, it was hoped that the members of the court, by taking friendly counsel, and contributing their aid in maturing the Declaration, might be brought to see, eye to eye, that having found a *common ground of agreement*, they might afterwards go forward, exhibiting to the church and the world, the lovely aspect of brethren acting together in unity.

These reasonable expectations were speedily doomed to disappointment. Dr. Paul and his friends refused to take any part in the consideration of the Declaration, and notwithstanding the repeated invitations, and even entreaties, of some of the aged and venerable members of Synod, they persevered in this resolution, and kept entire silence during the time,—in all, two or three Sessions, that the document was under consideration by the court. They thus exhibited themselves more fully, in their true light as a faction, who had no common interest with the Synod; and as evidencing that they were wholly unwilling to have their sentiments judged by the Standards, and other received writings of the church. The Declaration, as was stated by several members of the court, when urging Dr. Paul and his friends to co-operate with their brethren, furnished a ground in which all personalities could be avoided; and if the members of Synod could come to agreement in this case, other points that had led to collision might be easily adjusted. This course did not, however, suit the views of those who had, from the first, done little else than deal in low personality and abuse. The careful preparation or emission of any document re-

\* These were William Gibson, from the congregation of Knockbracken, and James Oliver, from the congregation of Ballylaggan.



specting civil government, in accordance with the Standards of the church, was far from their intention, inasmuch as they could not but know that such a paper must condemn the sentiments which they had taught. It was therefore their wisest and safest policy to remain altogether silent. Thus only could they hope to keep up the delusion that they held the Standards of the church, while they were sapping and undermining them, or labouring to expose to the worst species of odium the principles which they inculcate. Their conduct in this instance was plainly factious, and clearly led to the conclusion, which even some who had been formerly favourable to their views deduced from it,—namely, that they were opposed in principle to the Standards of the church, and afraid or unwilling to have their sentiments respecting the different subjects contained in the Declaration, exhibited in connexion with the approved statements and reasonings of the Church.

Notwithstanding this factious procedure of the Eastern Presbytery, the Declaration received the serious and lengthened attention of Synod, the elders and people who were present from a large number of congregations, apparently taking the deepest interest in the proceedings. The harmony of views and fraternal concord displayed by the other members of court, without exception, in their remarks, inquiries and explanations, were most gratifying; and when the different statements had been considered in order, and alterations and additions made, the Declaration was unanimously, and with much apparent cordiality, adopted as an overture.

At the meeting of Synod in the following year, a majority of the Sessions sent forward their approval of the Declaration, and their earnest desire to have it finally passed into a law of the church. None, save those of the Eastern Presbytery, offered any objection to the grand principles contained in it. That a few ministers or others,—and they were very few,—should have hesitated about issuing it as the declaratory law of the church, need not be wondered at, after Dr. Paul, by his own peculiar powers of distortion, had exhibited it in the most obnoxious light, and had been heaping reproach, to an incredible extent, by means of the *liberal* press, upon those members of Synod who stood up in defence of the testimony of the church, and the order of the sanctuary.

At this meeting of Synod, the reasons of dissent of Dr. Paul and his three brethren, from the decision of Synod upon the Memorial from Knockbracken, were read, and “in compliance with their wishes,” engrossed in the minutes,—the answers by a committee, on the part of the Synod, were also ordered to be inserted. The “Reasons of Dissent” are given in the published Minutes of the adjourned meeting, and it is unnecessary to give them here,—but they are truly a curiosity in their way. They are just the quintessence of the “Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving,” by the Eastern Presbytery,—they contain allegations, such as were never before presented to an ecclesiastical body, as grounds of dissenting from its decisions,—and they are so extravagant in thought and language, that the document would be *merely* ridiculous, were it not to be taken as a part of the systematic attempts of Dr. Paul and his party to destroy the principles and character of the church,

and to throw all things into utter confusion. Let the paper be read, and the question must rise in every unprejudiced mind,—“Did any man *compos mentis* ever write such stuff before?” The person who penned the Reasons of Dissent, and those who adopted them as their own, some of them having ordered their names to be signed to them, who had not seen or heard them,—acted, in this instance, like men thoroughly infatuated, reckless alike of their own character, the reputation of Synod, and the common decencies of life. The Synod’s answer seems to have been prepared in accordance with the maxim of the wise man,—“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit;” \*—it is a calm, condensed, comprehensive statement, exhibiting the true characteristics of the paper of the Eastern faction, and vindicating with ability the Synod’s procedure.

Towards the close of the sessions of Synod, the *Loughmourne Memorial*, which had, as before related, passed the Committee of Bills at Moneymore, was read in open court; but upon it and some other papers, no order was taken, as the Synod had already continued as long in session as it suited the convenience of the greater number of the members to remain together. The reading of this document, however, in public, served one of the purposes of which its author and his friends never lost sight, in their contendings with the Synod. It was employed as a means of blackening the character of the church before the public. Immediately after the adjournment of the court, contrary to all order and decency, it was published in different *liberal* newspapers of the north of Ireland, such as the *Northern Whig* and *Belfast Newsletter*; it was duly copied into some popish journals in Dublin, and it found its way into newspapers of the same character in other parts of the empire. Its garbled and false statements were assumed as incontrovertible facts; the Editors of the *Covenanter* were of course held up to execration as monsters, and the Synod was represented as an assemblage of dark-minded and intolerant bigots and persecutors. Such was the honourable way in which Dr. Paul and his faithful allies conducted their warfare against the Synod, and the testimony of the Covenanted reformation. The Synod’s documents were irregularly, and in a garbled form, obtruded on the public, with numerous typographical blunders, while the papers of the faction were carefully printed; matters pending and untried were brought into the newspapers; and long before the Synod could enter upon their judicial consideration, a verdict had been found against them by the liberal newspaper press, on *ex parte* evidence and garbled testimony, in a case where it was clearly impossible for the Synod to advance any thing in their own vindication. It is believed that few instances, even in the annals of ecclesiastical controversy, can be produced of such Gothic warfare. The men who acted thus, showed that the common decencies and courtesies of life were as little regarded by them, as the carved work of the sanctuary, which they set themselves, with axes and hammers, utterly to undo. Loud and reiterated as was their outcry for discussion, they took an effectual method to foreclose all



proper discussion ; and the object to which they tenaciously clung was evidently to erect, on the ruins of the church's testimony, and of the character equally of their opponents, and of the whole Synod, a trophy to their own unprincipled liberality.

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*Attempt of Rev. Clarke Houston upon the character of several Ministers and Elders of Synod.*

An incident, which had some connexion with the proceedings of this meeting of Synod, will serve to shew, still farther, the spirit which the gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery cherished towards their brethren, and it cannot, therefore, be omitted in this place. In a case which came before Synod by petition, from the *Second Reformed Presbyterian Congregation*, Belfast, the late Dr. Mawhinny appeared as commissioner from the congregation, and made some statements concerning an interruption of public worship, which differed from the statements made by the minister of the congregation (Mr. Boyd). As Dr. Mawhinny's observations, made in Synod, were grossly misrepresented in the account of the proceedings which were given in the *Northern Whig*, so as to exhibit him in a light injurious to his character, he addressed a communication to the editor of that paper, complaining of the injustice which had been done him, and demanding a retraction. A person signing himself *Reporter*, acknowledged the justice of *four* out of *six* of the Doctor's objections to the report, representing them, of course, as of no material consequence. In relation to one instance of which Dr. Mawhinny complained as totally false, and which was indeed a most impudent falsehood, in which he had been represented as expressing regret that *he had interrupted public worship*, the *Reporter* re-iterated the allegation, but offered to withdraw it, if any six members of Synod would sign their names to a document, purporting that Dr. Mawhinny had not in Synod expressed such regret. To this call, the Doctor promptly yielded, and a brief attestation was published in the *Whig*, signed by *four* ministers and *two* elders, declaring that Dr. Mawhinny did not express in Synod regret for having interrupted public worship. The names affixed to this paper were those of Rev. James Dick, William Toland, Thomas Houston, and Arthur Fullerton ; and those of the elders, William Gibson and William Wylie. At the first meeting of the Northern Presbytery, which was held after the meeting of Synod, the *Rev. Clarke Houston* presented a paper, purporting to be a *libel*, against the first three mentioned ministers, who were members of Presbytery, on the ground that they had published a falsehood ; and in his anxiety to obtain his base object, overleaping the bounds of orderly procedure, he summoned, or procured the attendance of, a number of his own congregation, and others, as witnesses, and gave such notoriety to the matter, that a very numerous assembly was convened on the occasion. The *animus* of such a step is too evident to require comment. But the reason of venturing upon it, is not so apparent to persons unacquainted with other circumstances. The meeting of Synod at Cullybackey had told a sad tale upon Dr. Paul and

his friends, among the sagacious and discerning members of the church, who were present. The principles and spirit of the Editors of the *Covenanter*, and of those who acted with them, in pleading against defection and innovation, were seen in a different and not unfavourable light, in a place where they had often before been misrepresented. The displays of temper which the Rev. C. Houston had made, during the sessions of Synod, certainly did not tend to prepossess the audience either in favour of himself, or the cause which he had espoused. In the same spirit and temper, he endeavoured to hold up the ministers and elders who had signed the paper in defence of Dr. Mawhinny's character, as having published a deliberate falsehood, and all at once to bring them to trial for such a serious delinquency. Besides, the *reporter* in the *Whig* was believed to be the eldest son of Mr. C. Houston, a youth whose manner of life was too well known to require description; and to contradict *his* report could not be tolerated by a father, who had employed him to misrepresent, and vilify the ministers of the church in the public papers, or had at least connived at such conduct. By misrepresenting the point in dispute, and telling simple people of newspaper statements which they, probably, never read, some were brought to credit the tale, and were induced to offer to give testimony in the case. Some of these afterwards confessed they had been misled; and when, before the Presbytery, the matter was explained in its true light, a very different impression was produced on the portion of the community who were present, from what they had formerly been led to entertain. When the paper of the reverend libeller was found to be informal, and he was directed afterwards to prefer his charges as a regular libel, he deemed it more prudent not again to come forward as a prosecutor, satisfying himself with disseminating, as far as he was able, the allegation of unfairness against the Presbytery.\* The whole of this proceeding shews, to a lamentable degree, the animosity cherished by members of the Eastern Presbytery against their brethren, who stood up to plead for truth, or to vindicate aspersed character, and how unscrupulous they were as to the means employed to ruin their reputation, and mar their usefulness.

\* The members of Presbytery, having been attentive witnesses of the proceedings at Synod, were amazed at the madness of the attempt to criminate the brethren, in a matter in which their innocence was so manifest; and the moderator, the Rev. Samuel Carlile, who was moderator of Synod in Cullybackey, was constrained to declare that Dr. Mawhinny had been very guarded in alleging that the irregularity of interrupting public worship was caused not by him, but by the minister; and that he would not believe any number of oaths, contrary to the evidence of his own senses.



## SECTION VII.

*Synod of 1838.—Violent attempts of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Faction.—Sessions of Synod unusually protracted, through the uproar and confusion which they occasioned.—Resolutions of the Committee of Synod, respecting the matters in dispute.—Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery utterly reject the pacific measures.—Dr. Paul's Amendment.—The Synod forced to break up before concluding the business.—Proceedings of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, in connexion with Liberals, Radicals, &c., after the meeting of Synod.*

It will be evident, from the preceding narrative, that Dr. Paul and his friends of the Eastern Presbytery had, for a length of time, ceased to act in friendly co-operation with their brethren in the Synod,—that they not only differed from the church on important principle, but that, on all great questions, they acted in close concert to prevent them from being settled, according to the received testimony, and order of the church. Such a mode of procedure was manifestly factious and schismatical. The members of the Eastern Presbytery were plainly the *movement* party, assailing the principles of the church, violating her order, and pursuing courses diverse from, or opposite to those which she had hitherto followed. They were nowise scrupulous in the choice of the means to which they had recourse for accomplishing their designs; and when they were foiled in their projects, their conduct discovered any thing but a disposition to bow to the authority of the Synod, to respect its character, or to preserve the unity and peace of the church. The Synod, and the Editors of the *Covenanter*, acted on the defensive all along, being called to stand up in support of valuable principles, or to vindicate their own character against reiterated, insidious, or open attacks, made by Dr. Paul and members of his Presbytery, or by his faithful allies of the liberal press. The Synod simply desired to hold fast all the truths which they had espoused, and to walk in the way in which their illustrious forefathers had travelled; and if they erred in dealing with those who sought to turn them aside from this path, it was assuredly on the side of forbearance and love of peace, rather than of justice or severity. Had Dr. Paul and his friends been desirous of following the things that make for peace or edification, when they perceived that the unequivocal sense, and feeling of the church were against their new-light sentiments, and innovating courses, they would have ceased from agitation, and satisfied themselves with recording their dissents from acts of Synod, without continually endeavouring to retard its business, and embroil its peace, and without lending their countenance to heap reproach upon the profession, ministers and members, of the church, through the medium of the newspaper press. Such a pacific course was, however, quite foreign from the designs of these gentlemen; and through their disorderly, factious, and violent proceedings, the Synod and the

whole church, in this country, were called to endure a great fight of afflictions, in the period that intervened between the meeting of Synod in Cullybackey, and the time when Dr. Paul and his party tabled their declinature.

Shortly before the meeting of Synod in 1838, in perfect keeping with the disorderly course which they had hitherto pursued, Dr. Paul and his brethren of the Presbytery endeavoured to stir up the members of the church, and to excite the public mind against the Synod, on subjects which were expected to come under consideration. On the Mondays after the communion, at Cullybackey, Linen-Hall-Street, Belfast, and Newtownards, in the presence of the congregations and strangers who were assembled, Dr. Paul brought forward a paper, purporting to be observations on the Synod's Declaration in overture, exhibiting this document in the most odious light, as teaching the worst species of bigotry, intolerance, and persecution, and distorting its expressions, while applying them to Roman Catholics, Arians, &c., so as to draw the keenest hostility of these parties upon the church. And, as if this were not publicity sufficient, the Eastern Presbytery adjourned its meeting at Cullybackey, on the communion Monday, to one of the Meeting-houses of the Synod of Ulster in Ballymena, to be held the next day; and there, before as many of the community as his friends could collect together, Dr. Paul read his paper, and held up to public abhorrence the Synod's *monstrous, bloody, persecuting*, overture, by which gentle epithets he was pleased to designate it. And to disseminate still more widely the exposure, and, as far as possible, to bring the Synod under the execration of public opinion, and the terror of Romanists and others, a report of the proceedings of the Presbytery in Ballymena, of which the writer was understood to be the eldest son of the Rev. Clarke Houston, was published in one or two of the Belfast liberal newspapers; in which, of course, all praise was awarded to that enlightened liberal divine, Dr. Paul, and to his co-presbyters, while the Synod was represented as narrow-minded bigots, entertaining the most persecuting and revolting principles. In this report also the barefaced falsehood was put forward, that the Scottish Reformed Synod had disapproved of the Declaration, a statement to which one of the Delegates from Scotland, at the Synodical meeting, referred, and which he flatly contradicted. Yet all this, and much more, was unblushingly done to serve the ends of faction and violence.

Dr. Paul's remarks on the Synod's Declaration, which the Eastern Presbytery adopted as their own, and which they have published, with the Dr.'s usual bravadoes about his own "unanswerable" writings and wonderful exploits since he seceded from Synod, will come under consideration in a subsequent part of this, or in a future pamphlet. Meanwhile, it may suffice to state, that the principal butt of his attacks,—the great object on which he expends his strength in his "Exposure" of persecution,—is the language of the New Scottish Testimony, which the writer of the *Declaration* brought in to displace his own, in the hope that Dr. Paul would shrink back from perverting, and holding up to



public execration the Scottish Testimony, as he had done the Covenanter,—a hope, unhappily, and in a short time, completely blasted.

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*Synodical Meeting in Ballymena, in 1838.*

From such conduct as we have narrated, it was not to be expected that the Synodical meeting held in Ballymena in 1838, would be a scene of harmony and peace; and yet we are confident that few of the members of Synod had any idea that Dr. Paul and his friends would so outrage all decency, and manifest such opposition to the Covenanted testimony, and such enmity to their brethren, as they did upon this occasion. The Synod of 1838 will long be remembered, and will be mentioned in the annals of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in future generations, as a mournful era, notorious for the display of latitudinarian doctrine, of the mad intolerance of liberality, and the triumph of disorder and clamour over all discipline and authority, leading to nearly complete disorganisation. Dr. Paul and his friends have boasted of this meeting, as the time when the cause of liberty, of which they are the monopolists, was displayed to advantage, and when they prevailed over bigotry and intolerance. Let them enjoy the undisputed honour. As long as the memory of honest Covenanters shall recur to the sayings and doings of Dr. Paul and his allies at that period, we feel assured that their separation from the church will be regarded as a blessing, rather than as an event in any way, save for their own sakes, and for the sake of the misled people who have followed them, to be deplored.

The meeting of Synod of 1838 was protracted to nearly two weeks, at a serious expense, and inconvenience to many members, especially the eldership of the church; and this, as in the case of the adjourned meeting of the preceding year, may be considered part of the price, which honest witnesses are called to pay, in maintaining the testimony of their fathers against disorderly and violent attempts to put it aside, or to trample it under foot. Dr. Paul and his friends enjoyed means of living in Ballymena, without being subjected to the expense to which most other members of the court were exposed; and in the true spirit of modern liberality, they evinced not the smallest disposition to sympathise with brethren, who were unexpectedly detained from their families and flocks, double the length of time that was usually occupied with a meeting of Synod.

According to an arrangement made at the meeting at Cullybackey,—of the wisdom of which we always had serious doubts,—to which, we believe, the Synod was led by a perpetual clamour about free discussion, the Memorials from sessions and congregations, which had been in the clerk's hands, and others bearing on the disputed points, which were now brought forward, had precedence of all other business. Of these papers, the principal was the Memorial from *Loughmourne*, the nature and contents of which

we have already noticed. Petitions from many sessions and congregations were presented, and commissioners were heard on the floor of Synod, in their support. These papers referred, in general, to the discussion on the subject of the magistrate's power, and were either in support of the Loughmourne Memorial, or were condemnatory of the sentiments and procedure of Dr. Paul and his party, or they related to the Declaration in overture. With the exception of the congregations of the Eastern Presbytery, no congregation under the care of Synod, offered the slightest approval of Dr. Paul's new-light views and disorderly conduct. And though the Synod's Declaration in overture was caricatured and opposed in papers from the sessions and congregations of the Eastern Presbytery, almost all the other sessions and congregations that memorialised Synod, spoke of it in terms of commendation, and earnestly urged that it should be forthwith adopted, as the law of the church,—only two, or three asking for some slight alterations in the language or arrangement, or expressing doubts of the expediency of bringing it forward, in the present circumstances of the church. All other matters, however, had to give way, that a controversy, which had been set to rest *five years* before, might be renewed, in express violation of a law of Synod, unanimously passed at that time! We have already noticed the way in which the Loughmourne Memorial was licensed by the Committee of Bills, at Moneymore in 1837, and the notoriety which it obtained, after it was read publicly at Cullybackey; and we have expressed regret that the Synod, in this case, succumbed to intimidation, or gave way to expediency, in the hope of maintaining peace with men, whose every thought and desire breathed interminable war.

The delegates from the Reformed Synod in Scotland had been appointed to attend this meeting, with the express recommendation that discussions respecting the magistrate's power should, if possible, be avoided. Not so, however, thought Dr. Paul and his friends. They had chosen their ground; they had mustered their supporters and satellites; and they well knew how to turn to their own account, the passiveness, and love of peace of members of Synod, who were not so immediately concerned as parties in the dispute. Dr. Paul appeared to keep steadily in view the praises and rewards of parties political and ecclesiastical, who hailed his attacks upon ancient scriptural principle, and who cheered him on: and accordingly he did exert himself to the utmost, approving himself a thorough champion of liberalism, and a true knight-errant of toleration. To those who are, in any measure, acquainted with his method of dealing with the testimonies, and other formularies of the church, and of treating those who hold these symbols, there was nothing very new in his reasoning on this occasion. But certainly he far outdid himself in distortion and misrepresentation,—in deep malignity towards the Editors of the *Covenanter*,—in aspersing the memories and principles of covenanted witnesses, and martyrs of a former time,—and in gathering odium from every quarter to cast upon his opponents, and upon the whole church, because they would not abandon their testimony, or explain it away according to his liberal scheme.



By numerous quotations from the *Covenanter* and *Christian Magistrate*, he endeavoured to exhibit the doctrine of magistratical coercion, taught therein, as sanctioning intolerance, and the worst species of persecution. He alleged that Mr. Houston, in these writings, had taught the extirpation of persons and not of principles,—that capital punishments are to be applied to heretics and idolaters, and also to those who differ from us in opinion on religion,—that dominion is founded in grace,—and that the judicial laws, in their modes of punishment, are still fully obligatory,—all of which Mr. Houston has solemnly and frequently denied.\* He affirmed that the Editors would cut off Roman Catholics, if they had the power,—offered to prove, on any platform, that the *Covenanter* was ten times worse in what it taught about the restraint and coercion of gross heretics and idolaters, than '*Dens Theology*,' and laboured to refute the '*Reviewer Reviewed*,' by alleging that it contained a vast number of untruths, the proof, however, resting only on his own bare assertion. And, as discovering the spirit by which he was actuated from the beginning of this controversy, he declared that he would sooner believe the liberal press,—the Arian, Socinian, and Deistical press,—than the Editors of the *Covenanter*; and, in conclusion, he expressed his fervent wish that the *Covenanter*, and other pamphlets of Mr. Houston, were made a bonfire of! †

Of the arguments employed by Dr. Paul and his brethren, we merely observe, for the present, that they contained hardly any reference to the Standards of the church, supreme or subordinate, and that their reasoning would go to exhibit the Reformers' confessions and declarations, and the approved writings of the church, as intolerant and persecuting; nay, even their tendency was to fasten upon portions of the Scriptures themselves the same charges, and their statements on several occasions raised the laugh, from giddy hearers, against the laws of the Bible. The subordinate actors in this drama, in some instances neglecting the caution or policy of their leader, represented the eminent Reformers and their writings, relative to this subject, as worthy of marked condemnation. Thus, ‡ one of the commissioners on Dr. Paul's side † declared, in Synod, that the Reforming Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that sanctioned the Westminster Confession, not only

\* These allegations are brought forward in the "Declinature" of the Eastern Presbytery; the reader is referred to our remarks on that document, in a subsequent part of this pamphlet, for a refutation of these oft-repeated calumnies.

† In former periods of the history of the church, the burning of their writings was frequently connected with the burning, or otherwise putting to death of faithful witnesses for the truth. The spirit discovered by Dr. Paul, when he spoke of the bonfire of Mr. Houston's writings, was certainly not very unlike that which was shewn by some who enbrued their hands in the blood of the saints, or who urged on the persecutor. One of his dupes observed afterwards, that Dr. Paul's name and achievements would go down with honour to posterity, while Mr. Houston would be burnt in effigy. So much for Dr. Paul's LIBERALITY AND TOLERATION!

‡ The commissioner was from Cullybackey congregation.

taught persecuting principles, but actually persecuted,\*—and alleged that the illustrious martyr James Renwick, denied the doctrine of the Mediator's Headship over the nations! When the Synod generally marked with disapprobation such statements, and refused to allow the commissioner to proceed in this course, Messrs. Alexander and C. Houston pleaded that he should have liberty to misrepresent the principles, and dishonour the character of those, whom the church had along been accustomed to revere; and Dr. Paul, in advancing the same plea, seemed to have peculiar acquaintance with the object of the commissioner, which, he said, was to show that the Reformers were in error in some points; and assuming his unfounded allegation concerning Renwick, he argued that if they were in error on the article of Messiah's Headship, "they might be supposed capable of falling into mistakes on the Magistrate's power *circa sacra*."† As it was the Westminster Standards and Divines that were expressly mentioned by the commissioner, was not this apology of Dr. Paul a plain declaration, that these writings and their venerable compilers were in error on the subject of the Magistrate's power? Was not the allegation and the apology clearly calculated to shake all confidence in these writings as Standards, and to pave the way for their rejection in this character by the church?

After a patient hearing of the lengthened speeches of Drs. Paul and Henry, of the replies of the Editors of the *Covenanter*, and of the rejoinders of the former gentlemen,—a part of the second week being consumed,—various methods were proposed to bring the matter to a settlement. That in which all parties concurred, was the appointment of a committee, who had liberty to retire, or to meet from time to time, during the different recesses of the sessions of Synod, in order to digest a measure which might bring matters to an amicable adjustment. This committee consisted of Messrs. Gamble, Stavelly, Alexander, and Hawthorne, with Mr. Anderson, one of the Scottish Delegates; and as elders, Messrs. Torrens, Jackson, M'Neely and Macklin. After several meetings and much consultation, this committee presented a report, embodying a number of resolutions, which were designed to embrace the whole subject in discussion, and to bring the matter to a final settlement, so as to secure the unity and peace of the church, and the harmonious co-operation of all the members of Synod, in the maintenance of a common testimony for truth. These resolutions affirmed the Synod's resolutions of 1833, expressed regret that controversies had arisen to violate the arrangement then made,—lamented the ground of the disputes, while other great articles of the church's testimony were overlooked, and her energies in spreading the truth were restrained,—condemned all persecuting principles, while they declared that the open enemies of religion ought not, in a Christian land, to be admitted

\* Thus was the leading position of the pamphlet entitled "Persecution Sanctioned by the Westminster Divines, &c.," already noticed, brought forward on the floor of Synod, by one of Dr. Paul's party.

† See Report of Proceedings, &c., which was circulated with great zeal by Dr. Paul's party and friends, both in this country and Scotland.



to places of power and trust, but that nothing ought to be done, affecting the life, property, common liberty, or peace of persons differing in opinion, who are otherwise inoffensive members of society,—expressed deep concern that any should attempt to fasten on Covenanters the odious charge that they are bound to *extirpate persons*, while erroneous systems and doctrines are expressly mentioned in the Covenant, and enjoined all the members to avoid statements, in public and private, calculated to disturb the peace of the church.

The committee, besides, recommended a private friendly conversation among the members of Synod, before the adoption of the resolutions should be proposed. To this recommendation all parties acceded; and *three* several meetings of the Synod in private were held, with a view, by mutual explanation and friendly conference, to obviate difficulties, and, if possible, restore union and confidence. These interviews were productive of no beneficial results. On the contrary, Dr. Paul and his friends showed not the least disposition to go forward with their brethren in the maintenance of the Covenanted Testimony,—and their departure from the Standards, and their unwillingness to abide by them as the basis of government or unity, became still more manifest. Thus, in answer to an inquiry by a member of Synod, Dr. Paul said he considered it wrong for the Christian civil ruler to do any thing in his official character to restrain or punish the open propagation of sentiments, by which the very existence of magistracy is denied. And on the senior Editor of the *Covenanter* proposing that doctrinal differences between him and Dr. Paul should be understood to be at an end, on the latter agreeing to publish, as the basis of agreement in sentiment, a statement respecting the power and duty of the Christian Magistrate, from one or other of three Testimonies of the Reformed Presbyterian Church,—namely, from the old Act and Testimony, the New Scottish Testimony, or the American Testimony, he refused, alleging that parties might not, after all, be agreed in their views of the meaning of these passages.

The object of the private conferences not being effected, it was evident that Dr. Paul and his friends aimed to protract the business, and to prevent the Synod from coming to a decision on the committee's resolutions. At one time they alleged that sufficient opportunity had not been allowed for private conference; and when they were indulged in this particular, their own anti-pacific spirit only became the more apparent. Again, it was stated as a reason of delay, that the Eastern Presbytery wished a copy of the committee's resolutions for consideration. This also was conceded; and when no other subterfuge served, and Dr. Paul and his friends had sufficient time for preparing their measures, the Synod was suffered, at last, to proceed to the consideration of the committee's resolutions.

To evince his desire to promote the peace and unity of the church, and his willingness to make any sacrifices, consistent with the maintenance of a faithful testimony, Mr. Thomas Houston at once concurred in the resolutions, and moved their adoption by the Synod. This motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Porter, one of the most intelligent and venerable elders of the church, and was re-

ceived with general satisfaction by the Synod. There might have been reason to expect, that a measure which was unanimously recommended by a committee, composed of those who were esteemed fathers in the church, would not have encountered much opposition from any quarter; and certainly, if the object had been to continue and strengthen the brotherly covenant, or to advance, by harmonious co-operation, the church's welfare, this would have been the case. But Dr. Paul and his party had other ends in view; and they soon showed that the judgment of Synod's committee, and the peace of the church, were esteemed by them of little importance, when they stood in the way of their attainment.

After assailing the committee's resolutions, on account of their alleged vagueness and unfaithfulness,—declaring, in his own peculiar style, that it would be easy to *drive a coach and six* through such resolutions,—and because they appeared to regard his own charges against the *Covenanter* and its Editors, as frivolous and groundless, Dr. Paul proceeded, as usual, to declaim about intolerance, persecution, &c.,—and concluded by moving, as an amendment, which was seconded by Rev. Dr. Henry, that after the words, “holding different opinions” in the committee's resolutions, there should be inserted the words, “or avowing or defending them,”—that the persecuting principles which he alleged to be taught in the *Covenanter*, *Christian A. agistrate*, and the *Reviewer Reviewed*, be judicially condemned; as also the untruths and calumnies which he said were contained in the last named pamphlet,—and that the Eastern Presbytery be allowed to adopt the Scottish form of the Fourth Term of Communion. This amendment speaks for itself, and we are therefore spared the necessity of much comment. It not only declared that Dr. Paul and his friends utterly despised the labours of the committee, and spurned with indignation any measure, that contemplated a continuance of brotherly concord and co-operation. It showed all the other members of Synod, how fruitless were their attempts at agreement with the Eastern Presbytery, on any other ground than that of adopting Dr. Paul's new-light views, and of condemning the principles and stigmatizing the memories of their forefathers as persecutors on principle. The disorderly course of requiring the alteration of the Fourth Term of Communion, after the decision of Synod last year, need not be pointed out, only as it serves to show that the Eastern Presbytery evinced, by it, their determination never to cease from agitating subjects in dispute, however repugnant to the feelings of Synod. And if a doubt remained on the minds of any before, respecting the contrariety of Dr. Paul and the Presbytery's views, to the Standards of the church, they seemed resolved, in the closing act, to dispel that doubt completely, by requiring the Synod to declare, in express opposition to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, (chap. xx. art. 4.) that the Christian civil ruler should do nothing towards restraining persons from “avowing and defending” opinions, however irreligious, immoral and abominable. This was equivalent to requiring the Synod to give a direct contradiction to the statement of the Confession! The mask, which Dr. Paul and his friends had long attempted to wear, was



plainly thrown aside,—and they practically declared, that it was not against Mr. Houston and the *Covenanter* alone that they were contending, but against the intolerance and bigotry of a portion of the Westminster Confession! After such an avowal, common honesty should have restrained them from striving to delude their simple people, by persuading them that they still held the doctrines taught in the Standards of the church.

Finding that all hopes of an amicable settlement with persons avowing such sentiments, and manifesting such a spirit, were for the present at an end,—feeling that, in fact, they were unable to carry any measure, the Synod agreed to adjourn the farther consideration of the subject till the next annual meeting. Thus nearly a fortnight was consumed in unprofitable discussions. The regular business of the court was almost wholly neglected. Scenes of uproar and confusion, such as had never before occurred, since the Synod had been constituted, were introduced,—and the Synod and the whole church were made the scorn and derision of their neighbours round about. Throughout all his speeches, and his whole conduct, at this memorable meeting, Dr. Paul seemed to have his eye to a certain portion of the audience, and to have little or no regard to the court; and every thing was done that it was possible for him and his party to do, to trample on its authority, and render it a mere nullity. The Synod was certainly wanting to itself, in not arresting such contumacious and rebellious conduct,—and still more, in allowing, without rebuke, principles to be declared in court, which were directly opposed to the testimony of the church, and in permitting the memories of the Reformers to be vilified. The love of peace, the idle hope of retaining those who were pushing on the most violent measures, and the fear of consequences, diminished its wonted spirit and vigour. But, as in all such cases, passiveness and lenity only emboldened the advocates of innovation and error; and hastened and increased, instead of averting evils that were dreaded. The friends of religion, of whatever name, beholding the confusion that was introduced, and the injury that was done to the church; pitied and deplored; while the infidel, the irreligious and the profane, and others of better principles, and practice, but who disliked a Covenanted testimony, rejoiced.

The reports of the Synod's proceedings in the *liberal* newspapers, manufactured so as to exhibit Dr. Paul as the champion of civil and religious liberty, and to set off his speeches, and those of his friends, in the most advantageous light, were actually read by popish priests to their flocks in the chapels, on the Sabbath; and in some parts of the kingdom, there can be little doubt, that personal violence would have been resorted to, against those who had stood forward, in defence of the testimony and character of our forefathers. The Lord stills the tumults of the people, and makes the wrath of man to praise him; and therefore were his servants preserved in safety. But certainly no thanks are due to Dr. Paul and his friends, who did every thing in their power to excite against their brethren, the worst passions of the erroneous and immoral throughout the community. Well might one of the fathers in the ministry, who was a member of the committee, with tears in his eyes declare before Synod, when alluding to these attempts,

that "the worst species of persecution to which the Covenanting Church had been exposed for the last 150 years, had been on the floor of the Synod."

There can now be no question that the Synod stumbled, in first licensing, by the admission of the Loughmourne Memorial, the renewal of a dispute on which they had already deliberately adjudicated; and afterwards, in permitting such attacks upon the church's testimony, and upon character, to be made in court, to the exclusion, in a great measure, of proper business. It is justice, however, to state, that it was through a desire to promote peace and preserve unity, and in the hope of effecting an accommodation, and not from the slightest leaning to Dr. Paul's new-light doctrines, or the slightest approval of his disorderly procedure,—that many of the members of Synod suffered the time to be wasted, and the gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery to spue out their liberalism, and venom against the reformers, and their brethren in Synod. Dr. Paul's treatment of the committee's resolutions at the close, must have shown these members of court, on what a weak foundation were built all hopes of a right peace with those who had slighted a Covenanted testimony, and who courted and secured the favour and applause of its inveterate enemies. But the church and the religious community will, by this time, have learned sufficiently, with what kind of a party the Synod had to do; and will have little hesitation in ascribing the honour or infamy of all the turmoil, irregularity and confusion that took place in the meeting of 1838, and the reproach that from it was heaped upon the Covenanting cause and church in this land, to Dr. Paul and his party. The Editors of the *Covenanter*, who were the principal butt of the attack, and whose character and writings were exhibited, both in the Synod and in the newspapers, in every light that could render them odious, exercised all forbearance. They had warned the Synod of the evil consequences of opening the discussion on Magistracy, and of allowing Dr. Paul to make his reckless assaults upon the principles and character of the Reformers. When, notwithstanding, the discussion was admitted, and in the worst possible form, involving the most vulgar and offensive personalities, they suffered themselves to be held up as a gazing-stock and reproach,—even enemies who were present at Synod, could not allege that they discovered any disposition to retaliate, or any vindictive spirit. They simply endeavoured to vindicate valuable principles that were assailed, and left their own character and writings in the hands of the church, and with Him who judgeth righteously. And when a measure was introduced by the committee, which had for its object the restoration of peace and harmonious co-operation, though it did not directly censure the error and irregularity of the revilers of the testimony, they offered it their ready support; and departing from their original intention, resolved to abstain from farther discussion, lest it might impede the settlement of the case, and concluding that Dr. Paul's malignity and extravagance would thus produce a more decidedly salutary reaction. They defended precious truth, and resisted error and innovation: they stood forth to maintain good order; and they always evinced a readiness to make sacrifices for the sake of unity and



peace. They manifested little concern about their own honour or reputation, and they carefully abstained either from displaying excited feelings, or from seizing advantages; which they could easily have taken, of treating Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters as they treated them. Their study all along was, to maintain a spirit and deportment, amidst assaults of the most virulent character, that they might in some measure say with the Apostles of the Lamb,—“ Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”\*

And, in looking back to this painful period, we are truly thankful to Him who keeps his servants from the strife of tongues, and gives internal peace and comfort, that we were preserved, from saying or doing any thing that could afford just reason, even for calumniators, to say that we were, in any way, instrumental in preventing the Synod from coming to a righteous settlement. We have now the satisfaction of knowing, that the spirit and demeanour which the Editors of the *Covenanter* discovered, when exposed to scorn and reproach and contempt, as contrasted with that of Dr. Paul and his allies, at this meeting of Synod, did much throughout the church, and the community, to rescue them from undeserved odium, and, with many candid and honourable persons who were inclined to favour Dr. Paul's views, to lead to disapprobation both of his principles and spirit.

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*Favours and Gifts of Radicals and Voluntaries to Dr. Paul.*

Although Dr. Paul must have felt that he had no hope of obtaining from the Synod an approval either of his principles or conduct; and that his proceedings, both in Synod and out of it, only served to alienate still farther from him the affections of the pious and devoted members of the Church, he was well aware, at the same time, that he took the fair way of succeeding in an object which appears to have been more dear to him than the maintenance of Reformation principles. The Liberals in politics,—the Voluntaries, and the opponents of the Westminster Confession,—and even Papists, Arians, and Infidels, had cheered him on in his attempts to root out the testimony, and destroy the reputation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. That Dr. Paul was not indifferent to the favour of these parties, was evident from his never bringing forward, either in his speeches or writings, any Covenanting peculiarity, which might give them offence,—from his entering no caveat against their commendations of himself, even when they were joined with the most unsparing and abusive attacks upon the British Covenants, and the doctrines and measures of the Covenanted Reformation;—and from the close intercourse and consultation with leading men of some of the worst of these parties, which he was known to maintain during the sessions of Synod and afterwards. Soon after, he obtained the reward, for which, if he did not anxiously wish, he had at least faithfully laboured, by vilifying the Reformers, and exciting odium

and hatred against his own Church. Immediately after the meeting of Synod, his friends,—who were, in general, persons that gave little evidence of regard to practical religion, and were, in some cases, the openly erroneous and irreligious, exerted themselves, in all directions, to procure him a splendid Testimonial for his transcendent services; and a Soiree, which was numerously attended, was held in Belfast, to compliment him and his brethren of the Eastern Presbytery, on their liberality, their freedom from the bigotry and intolerance of their own Church, and their glorious achievements in the cause of civil and religious liberty. Some time after, a purse, containing *one hundred and fifty sovereigns*,—the fruit of contributions, which were raised throughout many parts of the province, and in other places,—was presented to Dr. Paul. It may suffice to state, that the persons who were most active in raising the contributions were either persons in the church, who were distinguished by their loose views of its testimony and order: or those without, who had abandoned a Covenanted profession, or were noted for their hostility to it. The principal actors at the Soiree, and at the subsequent meeting for presenting the testimonial, were leading radical politicians, Arian ministers, Independents, Romanists, active agents of the new national system of education, &c.\*

Among these were the *Rev. James Godkin*, some time a Romanist, but now an Independent minister, who was editor of the "*Christian Patriot*,"—a voluntary, independent, and radical newspaper, which figured during its short day in defaming the Westminster Confession, the Reformers, and Presbyterian principle and order. This was the writer who, in the *Northern Whig*, under the signature of Q. E. D.; had been the rampant and rabid maligner of the Covenanting Church. In these communications, he declared that the Reformed Presbyterian Church needed "a long robe to cover her hideousness,"—that "her ecclesiastical code is a mixture of Vandal barbarism and priestly tyranny, that would have disgraced the darkest era of Pagan superstition,—her laws are such as Dioclesian would have blushed to sign." He calls the Covenanting community "a

\* The person who presided at the soiree, was William S. Crawford, Esq., M.P., one of O'Connell's tail, who, for his exertions in behalf of universal suffrage, and other such sweeping measures, well deserves the name of *radical reformer*; and who, on a former occasion, at a meeting of the Remonstrants in County Down, denounced the Synod of Ulster, for those measures which led to the separation of the Arians. Among the speakers were Rev. John Scott Porter, the champion of Arianism, who was signally defeated in his controversy with the Rev. Daniel Bagot, and Mr. Maurice Cross, secretary of the Belfast Radical Association, and now one of the secretaries of the New National system of education. Such is a specimen of the company that assembled to grace Dr. Paul's triumph over the bigotry and intolerance of the Covenanting church. If report is to be depended upon, some of the committee for the Testimonial, were for carrying out their devotion to the cause of civil and religious liberty still farther, by inviting Dr. Denvir, popish bishop, to the soiree; and when others thought this might not have so good an aspect with the public, these members retired in disgust, alleging that Dr. Paul and his friends were, after all, but mongrel supporters of the cause of civil and religious liberty, because they were afraid to carry out their principles to their legitimate application.



body of bigots, breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"—"a church having the damning infamy of intolerance like a millstone round her neck,"—"men to whom it is a consolation to look through the grated windows of an exchequer dungeon, and contemplate the emaciated tithe martyr,"—"so zealous for truth, and so anxious for the spread of the Gospel, that they bid God speed to the ruffian that breaks open the door at midnight with a sledge,"—a church "whose principles lead to the consequences of converting the church into an *aceldama*, extinguishing all love and humanity, and changing all Christians into tigers;"—a "church cradled in rebellion,"—"rebels in creed,"—"rebels in the sanctuary,"—"rebels in society,"—"most levelling revolutionists,"—"most unrelenting destructionists," who would "root up and overturn every ordinance and institution of the land." And the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian church he characterised as "blockheads," who "stick to the black-letter of bigotry;" "give a license to transgress;" and instead of sacrificing *a pig*, would prefer as victims a Methodist or Papist, whose hairy scalps would crown their land-marks,"—"the advocates of persecution even to the death;" who "have not the manliness to defend, nor the humility to disclaim their hateful principles;" "notorious for their pulpit impertinence;" "bunglers in theological diplomacy;" "prodigies of bigotry"!! This venomous foaming, and ruffian railing, were ably exposed by a "*Layman in the Reformed Presbyterian Church*," in a pamphlet entitled "Q. E. D. unmasked," &c.,—and then the mean and dishonest reviler pretended, forsooth, that his invectives, of which the above are but a small specimen, were only directed against the *principles* of the Covenanting Church, and not against its ministers or people! It deserves to be remembered, that throughout all the scurrilous and malignant abuse which this writer cast upon the Synod and the church, he uniformly eulogised in the highest terms Dr. Paul and his party, while he characterised the Editors of the *Covenanter* and the Synod as "prodigies of bigotry." The presence of such a wholesale slanderer as a speaker at the Soiree to Dr. Paul, and the use which gentlemen of the Eastern Presbytery made of the "*Christian Patriot*" newspaper, of which he was Editor, sufficiently show, without further remark, the alliance which they willingly maintained, with those whose every word and action seemed to aim at nothing less than the utter subversion of the Covenanting Church. Had the character or principles of the church been dear to them, even in the slightest degree, it need hardly be said, they would have testified their abhorrence of such unprincipled revilers, and would have spurned from them, as vile and loathsome, their presents and applause.

That there were some others of better principles present at these meetings, and who took part in the proceedings, we do not deny; but some of them had written against the Westminster Confession, or were opposed to its subscription, or were misled by political or voluntary partialities, or were utterly ignorant of the true state of the case. The general complexion of the meeting plainly declared the nature of the services, which Dr. Paul and his party had rendered to the cause of civil and religious liberty. Where, we may ask,

had ever such persons shown favour to an honest Covenanter? Could it, indeed, be expected that they would do homage to those, who pointedly condemned their own principles, political or religious? The supposition is irrational and absurd. Honest Covenanters every where blushed for such an alliance. The Testimonial, coming from such hands, was styled "the wages of iniquity;" and we have reason to think that not a few, who wish still to be considered Covenanters, though friendly to Dr. Paul, have been long since ashamed of the company, with which the ministers of the Eastern Presbytery appeared in this transaction.\*

#### SECTION VIII.

*Synodical meeting of 1839.—Measures introduced to prevent renewed Discussion.—Members of the Eastern Presbytery the movers in the business.—Decision of Synod in relation to the Scottish Testimony.—Inconsistent conduct of the Eastern Presbytery.—Renewed Attempts of Dr. Paul to disturb the peace of the Church.—Synod of 1840.—Rejection of Papers of the Eastern Presbytery in the Committee of Bills.—Dr. Paul and his faction decline the Synod's authority, and formally separate themselves from the Reformed Presbyterian Church.*

At the next meeting of Synod in 1839, which was likewise held in Ballymena, it was expected that the Resolutions of the Committee of last year would be brought forward, with a view to their adoption; and various papers, referring to the matter in dispute, which had passed the Committee of Bills, were also expected to be taken under consideration. Several new papers referring to the same subjects were presented. That from Dr. Paul and his session, which was rejected, with marked disapprobation, by the Committee of Bills, exceeded in virulence and malevolence any that he had hitherto submitted to Synod. Had the Editors of the *Covenanter* been desirous to continue dissensions,—had they been as anxious to vindicate their character or principles, as Dr. Paul was to assail them, or as they were to maintain the testimony, and preserve the peace of the church upon a proper foundation, they would have stood upon their right of defending themselves against the grievous charges, and odious allegations which Dr. Paul had advanced against them at the close of the last Synodical meeting. As the appointment of the committee was made, before the matters in dispute came properly into discussion in Synod, and it had been arranged that

\* We forbear to notice, at present, the speeches delivered at the soiree to Dr. Paul, though they furnish several choice specimens of the latitudinarian views and illiberal spirit of the new-light gentlemen of the East, and of the party with which they identified themselves. Nor is it requisite that we should wait to expose the unchristian, ungentlemanly, and virulent attack which the Rev. Clarke Houston, then clerk of Synod, made upon the congregation of Knockbracken, for exercising its undoubted rights, in relation to a matter still pending before Synod. Such a pitiful attempt to excite prejudice and odium, only exposed to marked abhorrence the spirit that actuated the man who made it, and recoiled on his own head. It was, however, in keeping with the man, combining together a large portion of characteristic haughtiness and meanness.



the parties, namely, Dr. Paul and the Editors of the *Covenanter* would, when the subject was taken up by the court, have the same right with other members in discussion, and the deliverance of Synod, the Editors of the periodical had reserved much that they had to advance to such an opportunity, and for reasons already stated had withheld it entirely. But as Dr. Paul had, in a way utterly unprecedented and disorderly, in his speech in Synod, in 1838, advanced the allegation of numerous untruths and errors in the *Reviewer Reviewed*, Mr. Houston, the writer of that pamphlet, said he would not follow the same disorderly course, by offering a reply at the time,—but he had prepared for the Synod of 1839, and he had calculated on being allowed an opportunity of submitting, his defence against Dr. Paul's foul and false imputations, and of exhibiting still farther the principles and spirit which Dr. Paul had discovered, in advancing such charges. But still willing to leave the clearing of their character to Him who judgeth righteously, and desirous, as they had been from the beginning, to keep out of view, matters that appeared of a private or personal nature, in order that a controversy, which was felt by the church to be irksome and unpleasant, might be terminated, and that peace might be restored, they readily acquiesced in a proposal which was early brought forward, by which all discussion, on the points in dispute, was precluded during the meeting of Synod.

This proposal, let it never be forgotten, was made by the Eastern Presbytery and their friends. The men who were always shouting for discussion, till Mr. Houston had a long arrear, from last Synod, and during the recess, to bring up, now probably feeling that they had obtained all the reward they could expect for the advocacy of liberalism, and that their hopes of bringing the Synod round to their views, were even more slender than formerly, came forward with a motion, which of necessity prevented discussion, and which was substantially adopted by Synod. We shall afterwards see more fully how little reason these gentlemen had to complain that they were denied the liberty of discussion;—but meanwhile, it will be clearly seen, that whether this complaint was well or ill founded, it was they themselves that foreclosed the discussion, when Mr. Houston had a large claim upon the attention and indulgence of the Court.

On presenting the reports of Presbyteries, which is usually done early on the second day of the meeting of Synod, the report of the Eastern Presbytery, of which Dr. Paul was Clerk, contained a recommendation that the Synod should take measures for having the Formula for Ordination, the Terms of Communion, and the New Testament, which had received the sanction of the sister Synod in Scotland, submitted to the subordinate judicatories in Ireland, with the view to their being adopted by Synod. A motion in the terms of this recommendation, deviating from the Synod's order, was presented immediately after the reading of the reports, and consequently before any other business was entered upon, by Rev. Clarke Houston, and seconded by Dr. Henry; and the Rev. Gordon T. Ewing, who was known to be quite friendly to the Eastern Presbytery, and who appeared to consult with Dr. Paul's friends in this instance, moved as an addition to the motion,—“That all discussion

on the papers, now lying on the table of Synod, be suspended until the documents mentioned in the motion be submitted for consideration to our inferior judicatories, and the result of the deliberations returned to Synod." The members of the Eastern Presbytery readily acquiesced in this addition to their motion, so that it was at once appended to, and may be regarded, in reality, as part of, the original motion. This deserves to be particularly observed, because of the outcry which Dr. Paul and his friends afterwards raised, about the injustice of the Synod, in denying discussion on the points at issue, and because of the delusion, which is still assiduously propagated on this subject.

To the motion of the Eastern Presbytery, an amendment was proposed by the *Rev. William Toland*, and seconded by Mr. Samuel Jackson, elder,—“That the Synod recommend to the consideration of the subordinate judicatories, the historical and doctrinal parts of the Testimony of the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Synod, with a view to their adoption by this church; and that the papers now lying on the Synod's table, be held *in retentis* till the reports of the inferior judicatories be received and adjudicated on.” This amendment was carried, after discussion, by a considerable majority. It will be seen that it embraced the principal matter in the motion of the Rev. Clarke Houston and Dr. Henry, namely, submitting the Scottish Testimony to the inferior judicatories of the church, with a view to its adoption, and deferring the consideration of papers bearing on the subjects in dispute, till order should be taken in relation to it. The omission of the Formula and the Terms of Communion, as matters of reference to the inferior judicatories, was the only point in which the amendment differed from the original motion. It is hardly necessary to state reasons why these were left out;—to those who have paid attention to what is related in preceding parts of this narrative, these will readily suggest themselves. It was argued in Synod, that it would be contrary to order to send the Formula and Terms of Communion to the inferior judicatories, as an overture, as it would imply that the Synod were not satisfied with their own,—that a committee had been appointed at the meeting of Synod in Cullybackey, to revise the language of the Formula,—and that to make the Terms of Communion an open question, might disappoint the desired object, and produce future division, instead of harmony and peace, especially as the Synod had recently determined, by a very large majority, that it was inexpedient at present to make any change in the Terms of Communion. Dr. Paul, without replying to these reasons, in his usual style, endeavoured to charge home intolerance and persecution upon the Acts of Assembly, and the Auchinsoagh Deed,—and declared himself dissatisfied with the concluding part of both the motion and amendment, as its effect would be to arrest discussion. In this objection, however, he was not joined, either by any of his brethren of the Eastern Presbytery, or by any other member of Synod.

The amendment having been carried, and arrangements having been made for giving it effect, the public business of the Synod, till the close, was conducted in an amicable manner. The only



matter that showed the workings of Dr. Paul's leaven of disorder and confusion, was that of the Rev. John Nevin, who had, in an irregular way, forsaken his charge in Liverpool. This young man had, from his first entrance into Synod, strenuously pleaded for Dr. Paul's sentiments, and had even shot ahead of his master, in proposing sweeping changes. The Synod having adopted the report of the committee, against which Mr. Nevin had protested and appealed, unanimously agreed that he had "acted unpresbyterially in leaving his congregation, in a manner inconsistent with his ordination obligations, and had also done injury to the Liverpool congregation : ' in consequence, he was publicly admonished at the bar of Synod by the Moderator. As the congregation had been dispersed, it was also judged expedient, that the pastoral relation between Mr. Nevin and the congregation of Liverpool should be dissolved, which was accordingly done :—a proof this, among many others of a similar kind, that pleading for new-light views, does not tend to build up congregations.—This circumstance is mentioned, merely to shew how loose the bonds of authority sit, and how lightly the sense of solemn vows rests, upon those who embrace latitudinarian tenets, or who plead for innovation.

Immediately before the final adjournment of this meeting of Synod, at a very late hour on Friday night, the Rev. John Alexander, of the Eastern Presbytery, offered a *protest* against the Synod, for sitting so late, and for not allowing opportunity of discussion for him and his friends. Leaving out of view the irregularity of protesting against no decision, this step, with the outcry raised by the Rev. C. Houston and Dr. Paul, about entering on discussion at so advanced a period, was truly foolish and ridiculous. The plan pursued throughout the controversy, by Dr. Paul and his friends, was always to keep up an outcry for discussion,—to represent their opponents as unwilling or afraid to discuss with them the subjects in dispute, when all they wanted was to embroil the Synod, or when they well knew that discussion was impracticable. On the present occasion, the Synod had continued its session, merely for the convenience of members who wished to return to their homes early the following day ; and they were precluded from taking up papers, by their act about the Scottish Testimony, and even by the motion which emanated from, or was adopted by, the Eastern Presbytery. Mr. Alexander's protest was, therefore, an instance of the inadvertency which he frequently discovered in Synod, during the progress of these discussions, combined with the disposition which he manifested, in common with his party, to keep matters in the Synod and the church in a state of constant turmoil and confusion.

To a person who had not been minutely observant of the spirit and movements of the party, who had been fighting against the testimony, and peace of the church, there would have appeared the fairest prospect of harmony in the Synod, for a long time to come. In the proposal to leave the papers that referred to principles in dispute, and to the conduct of both parties, untouched, until order should be taken on the Scottish Testimony, both the motion and amendment coincided ; and as this proposal

may be considered as having been presented to Synod by the Eastern Presbytery, one would have thought that this was a *bonâ fide* declaration, on their part, of their willingness to have a suspension of hostilities, at least till the Scottish Testimony had been disposed of. And as this publication, it was acknowledged, embraced the principal subjects in dispute, and offered explanations on most of them, it might have been expected that the calm consideration of it, would have the tendency to reconcile disagreeing parties, and to produce harmony and concord. Such reasonable expectations, however, were not realised. It had been no part of the policy of Dr. Paul and his friends, from the commencement of these unhappy disputes, to continue long quiet; and, from the expression given to the views and feelings of the church, at different meetings of Synod of late, they must have perceived, that their only hope of succeeding, was by agitation and confusion in the church. The subsequent proceedings of the party, till they withdrew from Synod, plainly evinced,—what indeed was, in some measure, apparent all along,—that they were determined to be bound by no acts of Synod, that opposed a barrier to their headlong courses, and that a calm consideration and settlement of the disputed topics, from which jangling and personal invective would be excluded, would not answer their purpose.

Accordingly, not many months after the meeting of Synod, Dr. Paul attended a meeting of the Northern Presbytery, which was held in Ballymena, and presented *three* lengthened papers, purporting to be libels, against the Editors of the *Covenanter*, and requested investigation. These papers contained nothing new, or that had not been already *discussed in Synod*, with the sole exception of the allegation, that their author had discovered a number of additional untruths in the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," and that his speeches in 1838 had not been fairly reported in the *Covenanter*.\* The contents of the first paper, designated a libel against Mr. Houston separately, for alleged error respecting the punishment of heretics, idolaters, &c., had been before the church courts and the public, for many years, in Dr. Paul's newspaper articles, speeches, pamphlets, and papers to Synod; and the other two papers had been, in part, before the Synod in 1838, or in substance before it at its last meeting, and were rejected in the Committee of Bills, as falling under the case of papers which were to be held, *in retentis*, till order should be taken on the Scottish Testimony. The Presbytery, considering that to take up such papers, would be altogether unpresbyterial, and also, a direct infringement of the Synod's settlement, and would only perpetuate confusion, unanimously rejected them; and Dr. Paul protested against this decision, for reasons which he afterwards assigned, and appealed to Synod.

#### *Synod of 1840.—Declinature of the Eastern Presbytery, &c.*

When the Synod met at Moneymore, in 1840, it soon appeared that Dr. Paul and his brethren of the Eastern Presbytery had not

\* When Dr. Paul first made the allegation, respecting the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," in Synod, the untruths were said to be 55,—now they were swelled out to 152! This was a mode of conducting a controversy, which few persons would have adopted.



been idle in the business of agitation. It was evident they had come prepared to prevent the Synod, as far as they were able, from going forward in a peaceful and harmonious spirit, and resolved either to renew, on the floor of the court, the former discussions, which had been so perplexing and harassing, or to accomplish a schism in the church. From *four* congregations of the Eastern Presbytery, whose pastors had been prominent in new-light innovation, petitions were presented, all bringing forward the matters in dispute, respecting the magistrate's power, &c.,—and those from Dr. Paul and his session and congregation exceeded, in bitterness and virulence, against the Editors of the *Covenanter* and the Synod, any that he had heretofore presented. These papers were so numerous, and some of them so lengthened, that they occupied, almost exclusively, the time of the Synod as a Committee of Bills, at different meetings, till the middle of Friday, near the close of the proceedings.

Among the first of the papers presented by Dr. Paul was his protest and appeal against the Northern Presbytery, with the accompanying documents which had been rejected by that court. The Synod in committee, after considerable discussion and a painful hearing of the matter, agreed, by a considerable majority, not to license the introduction of these papers into Synod. And it deserves to be remarked, that the members of the Northern Presbytery, amounting to *fifteen*, had no vote on the occasion, so that the decision may be regarded as a determined expression of the judgment of those members of court who were, in no sense, interested as parties, in opposition to Dr. Paul's attempt to renew former discussions, and injure the character of his brethren and of the whole church. The grounds on which the Synod rejected Dr. Paul's Protest and Appeal, and other most scurrilous papers, and those from the sessions, &c., of the Eastern Presbytery, were, that, as these papers contained scarcely any new matter, but were substantially the same as had been before the Synod at its last meeting, which the court had agreed should not be discussed in any form, till order should be taken on the Scottish Testimony, the introduction of these papers into open court would be in direct contravention of the Synod's own agreement. To bring them forward on the present occasion, was evidently the attempt of a defeated, dissatisfied minority, to trample down the Synod's deliberate decision. It was the work of a faction who felt they had lost ground in the church, and that in a quiet state of affairs, their innovating schemes would be more and more condemned; and they therefore endeavoured to throw all into complete confusion. The Synod could take no other course than to reject the papers, with any regard to good order, or to the peace and welfare of the church. They could not permit their deliberate acts to be trampled upon, at the dictation of a few members of a restless spirit. They had had experience sufficient already, that to give way to Dr. Paul's outcry for discussion, was the sure way of embroiling the Synod, and hindering it from the transaction of all proper business. And they were utterly at a loss to perceive on what consistent grounds the members of the Eastern Presbytery could claim that these papers should be taken under public consideration, when

they themselves had declared, by their motion of last year, their willingness that papers containing identically the same matters, should be held over till the New Scottish Testimony should be adjudicated on. For these reasons, the Synod in committee rejected the different papers from the Eastern Presbytery relating to the subject in dispute, as they were successively presented,—evincing thus their determination to maintain good order, hold fast the testimony which they had espoused, and secure, on the footing of truth, the unity and peace of the church, despite of the attempts of faction.

The spirit in which Dr. Paul and his friends met this firm expression of the Synod's judgment, needs not now to be particularly exhibited. Without offering any thing in the shape of substantial reasons for requiring the court to trample under foot its decision of last year, to which they themselves were, in some sort a party, they allowed themselves to display, throughout the whole proceedings, a querulous, contemptuous spirit; evidently looking forward to the ulterior step which they took before the close of the proceedings. To a disinterested spectator, this party must have appeared, almost during the whole business, both in committee and in public, as persons labouring to find some shadow of a pretext for breaking with the Synod, without being able to offer a single satisfactory reason for the course which they adopted.

As another instance of what we have so frequently noticed in this narrative,—the reckless attempts of the Eastern Presbytery to violate all order, and their avowed determination to be bound by no decision which did not come up to their own loose views, may be mentioned the discussion which, most unexpectedly, they forced on the Synod, at an early stage of the proceedings. On the forenoon session of Wednesday, Dr. Henry moved, and Dr. Paul seconded,—“That along with the Scottish Testimony, the Formula of Ordination and Terms of Communion, as adopted by our brethren in Scotland, be submitted to the subordinate judicatories of the church in Ireland, to be reported on at the next annual meeting of Synod.” This was precisely the motion which emanated from the Eastern Presbytery last year, and which the Synod, after a lengthened discussion, had rejected, by a large majority. Not a single new argument was presented by Dr. Paul and his friends, why the Synod should revoke its decision so recently passed;—but the occasion was seized by several members of the Eastern Presbytery, of exhibiting, (as they would have it), the intolerance and persecuting spirit and principles of the Covenanters at Auchinsnaugh, and of the General Assemblies of the memorable period of the Second Reformation, and of declaring publicly, in a tone of defiance, that they and their congregations would no longer act with the Synod, in holding the Formula and Terms of Communion, which had been in use in the church, for the last *seventy or eighty years*, even with the reasonable explanations which the Synod had offered, and in which they themselves had formerly acquiesced. The other members of the court regarded this motion,—so utterly contrary to all received order,—with surprise and astonishment; and the Synod, in a firm and faithful spirit, simply agreed, “That the Synod abide faithfully by both parts of its decision,



contained in the 6th minute of last year's proceedings,—namely, That they recommend to the consideration of the subordinate judicatories the historical and doctrinal parts of the Testimony of the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Synod, with a view to their adoption by this church; and that the papers now lying on the Synod's table be held *in relentis*, till the reports from the inferior judicatories be received and adjudicated upon.\* The majority in favour of this measure was larger than that of last year; and Drs. Paul and Henry, with Messrs. Alexander, C. Houston and Nevin, as might be expected, protested, and offered to assign reasons, which, however, were never presented to the court.

To show how little these gentlemen now considered themselves bound by any deed of Synod, however frequently affirmed, and how resolutely they were bent on embroiling the church, if they could not succeed in effecting changes in the basis of ecclesiastical fellowship, at the opening of the public business, on the very next day, Dr. Henry entered on the books, a notice of motion for the next meeting of Synod,—“That the Formula of Queries for Ordination, and Terms of Communion, as embraced by the sister Synod in Scotland, be taken under deliberate consideration by the church in Ireland, with a view to their being adopted as a part of reformation attainments.”† The object of this movement was too apparent to be misunderstood. It was a proclamation of unremitting war. It was telling the Synod, in the most unambiguous terms, that, except they would adopt the measures which the Eastern Presbytery dictated, they might bid farewell for ever to peace. Here was a matter already twice decided by large majorities in Synod; and one subject,—the Fourth Term of Communion,—a third time, in opposition to the Eastern Presbytery; yet, according to this notice, it was again to be brought forward as a theme of debate at the ensuing meeting of Synod. Proceeding in this way, it was evident that the business of Synod was completely arrested, whenever a disappointed and factious minority should choose to take their stand, for the introduction of any new-light doctrine or innovating usage; they might keep up the agitation from meeting to meeting, and either the Synod would be compelled to yield to them, or, if not, the whole business of the court would be retarded, and endless heart-burnings and disputes engendered. It is easy, moreover, to discover the objects aimed at by the Eastern Presbytery, in perpetually bringing forward these particular topics,—the Formula and Terms of Communion. By pleading for assimilating them to the Scottish form, they wanted to make it appear that they were one in sentiment with the Reformed Synod in Scotland, and that their brethren, who were opposed to innovation, were hostile to the Scottish branch of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. And by declaiming about unprinted Acts of Assembly, and about those Acts of Parliament which asserted, in strong terms, the restraint and punishment of idolatry, and by raking together, and throwing out before the public, disjointed expressions in the

\* Minutes of Synod for 1840.

† Minutes of Synod for 1840.

Auchinsaugh Deed, they contrived to asperse the memories and contentings of the Reformers, and to represent their opponents in Synod, as requiring implicit faith, as narrow-minded, intolerant and persecuting. It were idle to comment upon this mode of procedure. It must be apparent to the most inattentive observer, that such a course was the sure way to disturb the peace, and thwart the measures of an ecclesiastical court; and that it was plainly impracticable for the Synod to go forward with any prospect of comfort or efficiency, with men acting in such a spirit, and pursuing such conduct.

Whether the Synod should not, long before, have adopted measures for putting an end to such annoyance, and for vindicating its authority, we wait not now to inquire; but happily, as furnishing an effectual refutation of the calumny, that they acted with harshness or severity towards Dr. Paul and his friends, there was no measure taken or conduct pursued, during the proceedings at this meeting, that had even the appearance of severity towards those who declined the Synod's authority. On the contrary, the court acted towards them with singular lenity and forbearance. It was surely not right to permit contumacious members to despise the authority of the court, and retard its proper business, without taking measures for protecting itself, and censuring the offenders; and it was still less warrantable to allow sentiments to be uttered on the floor of the Synod, at variance with the standards of the church. Yet Dr. Paul and his faction were suffered to make repeated attacks upon portions of the basis of ecclesiastical fellowship, and to throw out the most odious charges against the principles and spirit of the venerable Reformers, without being called to order, or any restraint imposed on the liberty which they claimed and exercised, to unsettle what had been long established, and to misrepresent, vilify, and reproach principles and characters which the church had been accustomed to hold in veneration. Those members of Synod who were the butt of the attack,—the Editors of the *Covenanter* and a few others, suffered papers to be read, distorting their sentiments, and maligning their characters, without standing upon their undoubted rights, or opposing any obstacle to the unchristian, or ungentlemanly course taken by their revilers. If they exercised their privileges as members of court, to speak on subjects under consideration, they studiously abstained from every thing that had the least tendency to irritate Dr. Paul and his friends; and the whole business was conducted in so calm, pacific, and orderly a manner, that a disinterested spectator must have been constrained to admit, that there was no plea left to the minority, to take the course by which they severed the bonds of brotherhood, and produced schism in the church. The Synod could not possibly take any other course, if they were to preserve any—the least regard to order; and it deserves always to be repeated, that they were shut up to this course, even by the motion which emanated from the Eastern Presbytery itself, in 1839. Without stultifying themselves, by rescinding their deliberate acts, whenever a faction, bound by no regulations, not even by those to the framing of which they themselves had been a party, and eagerly bent on the subversion of Covenanting principle and order, would,



for ends of their own, offer opposition, they could have taken no other course, and one more gentle and conciliatory, can hardly be conceived.

However, Dr. Paul and his friends had advanced so far in their attacks upon the Standards of the church, had so blackened the character of Synod, and cherished such a spirit towards their brethren, that they felt themselves unable to recede. To tear to pieces the brotherly covenant, and publicly to raise the standard of schism and rebellion, was the step by which they closed their connexion with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and evinced their devotion to the cause of liberalism. On the last day but one of the Synod's sessions, immediately after the Committee of Bills had rejected the last of the papers, presented by the Eastern Presbytery, that referred to the subjects in dispute, when the court had resumed public business, Drs. Paul and Henry, with Messrs. Alexander and Nevin, with the elders and commissioners from their congregations, left the place of meeting without asking leave; and the Rev. C. Houston, having secured for himself and his party *the Synod's records*, requested permission of absence, on the pretence that he had been busily occupied, and required relaxation. The Synod having granted his request, the usual business was proceeded with. Shortly before the regular hour of adjournment, Dr. Paul, and four other ministers\* of the Eastern Presbytery, and elders and commissioners from four congregations, re-entered the place of assembly, and the Rev. Clarke Houston, having asked and obtained leave to make a communication to the court, read in his own name, and in the names of his brethren of the Eastern Presbytery, a paper entitled a *Declinature*,† which he afterwards laid on the table, and then he and the rest of the party withdrew from the house. The hour of adjournment being already past, the Moderator concluded the session with prayer.

On resuming business, the first notice which the Synod took of the melancholy and scandalous procedure of Dr. Paul and his friends, was to acknowledge the hand of God, in permitting the staff of bands to be broken; and on the motion of *Rev. William Sommerville*, it was unanimously agreed, that a day of fasting should be observed, by the different congregations under the care of Synod, as soon as practicable. The court shewed, by this step, that they regarded division in the church as of the Evil One, whatever gracious purpose it might be overruled to subserve. They de-

\* These were Dr. Henry, and Rev. Messrs. Alexander, C. Houston, and Nevin.

† This was just the memorial from Loughmourne,—the Libel against the Editor of the *Covenanter*, to the Northern Presbytery,—and the Petition to Synod of Dr. Paul and the Loughmourne people,—divested of their headings, and clumsily put into a shape, that might enable them to be called a *Declinature*. So chary was Dr. Paul of his papers, that, *Proteus*-like, they could assume any shape that suited the occasion, and multitudinous, indeed, have been the shapes into which his stale materials have been cast, for the last ten years, and times without number have his dupes been made to pay for the same matter,—and so implicitly did the other sages of the East follow the ringleader in division, that they seemed quite prepared to subscribe any paper which he penned!

explored the headlong measure adopted by Dr. Paul and others, as opposing an apparently insurmountable barrier to future agreement; and they felt their need of divine direction and support, in relation to the trials which they foresaw awaited them, in maintaining faithfully their fathers' testimony. For these and similar reasons, they regarded it as their first duty to humble themselves before the God of their fathers, in the desire and confidence that He who had been with his faithful witnesses in former days of suffering, would uphold, under every approaching trial. When the subject of the *Declinature* was adverted to, the following resolution was passed,—“That the Synod disclaim and condemn all errors, slanders, and misrepresentations, if any such are to be found in the publication or publications of any who are, or have been, members of this Synod; and that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the principles or statements contained in publications referred to, in the papers held *in retentis*, or in those which have been rejected at this time, by the Committee of Bills.” A deputation, consisting of the Moderator, and the Rev. Messrs. Cameron and Carlile, were appointed to wait on the Separatists, to lay this resolution before them, and to entreat them to return to their duty and place in the Synod, and in the event of their refusing, to require the Synodical records from the former clerk. The deputation, as was to be expected, failed in their object, with the exception of obtaining a promise, that the papers and records of Synod should be forwarded in due time. A committee was afterwards appointed to take charge of the Declinature, correspond with the sister Synod in Scotland, in relation to the separation, and watch over the concerns of the church generally, till the next annual meeting of Synod. This committee consisted of the Moderator, with Dr. Stavely, of the Northern Presbytery, Messrs. Brittin and Stott, of the Western Presbytery, and Messrs. Graham and Cathcart (Ewing alternate), of the Southern Presbytery.

These measures were adopted in the same pacific, conciliatory spirit, as had characterised the Synod's proceedings, throughout all the trials to which they had been exposed. They still cherished the hope, that their misguided brethren would repent of their sin and folly, and return to their duty. They therefore abstained from the exercise of even warrantable discipline towards those who had unfurled the standard of rebellion. They were desirous of keeping the door open for their return, so soon as they would evince a disposition to walk in the path of a sound testimony, and of scriptural order. The injuries which they had received at their hands, they were willing to overlook or bury in oblivion; and they felt so deeply concerned that a tribe should be missing in Israel, that they were willing, to the last, to meet them on any ground but that of a compromise of the church's testimony, and a violation of her established order. We may afterwards notice how little salutary effect this lenity had upon the spirit and conduct of the Separatists, and how it was abused, as had been the Synod's forbearance in former cases, to propagate delusion, and to subserve their interested purposes. Meanwhile we may be permitted to review the extraordinary document which they presented



on withdrawing from Synod, and to refer briefly to its principal allegations.\*

#### SECTION IX.

#### *Review of the "Declinature" of Dr. Paul and other Separatists from the Reformed Presbyterian Church.*

1. It deserves to be remarked, that the "*Declinature* of the Eastern Presbytery" is altogether peculiar in its form and arrangement. No similar document, we believe, was ever presented to an ecclesiastical court. The subscribers to the *Declinature* evidently either never properly considered what form such a paper should present, or they were unacquainted with the simplest points of ecclesiastical procedure, or, what is the most probable supposition of all, they were so eager to exhibit Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod in a most odious a light,—so anxious to draw a picture of both, that could not be looked upon without abhorrence, that they set at nought matters of order and arrangement, and presented to the church and the public, a document which outrages common sense and decency, and exceeds every paper of the kind in malice and wickedness. Thus, though the *Declinature* professes to be a paper of objections against certain judicial acts of Synod, it specifies no acts, as grounds of renouncing ecclesiastical connexion and subjection. It is almost entirely taken up in misrepresenting the sentiments of Mr. Houston, and holding him up to odium; and the Synod is held guilty, for not condemning doctrines which Mr. Houston never avowed, and of which it was impossible it should have any evidence, if we except Dr. Paul's barefaced and always disclaimed assertions, repeated so often, that he seemed determined to make men believe them, by mere force of declamation. It is not true, that the Synod ever refused to condemn any thing that was proved to be erroneous; but they refused to allow Dr. Paul and his worthy allies to proceed in the course on which they were bent,—of contemning all authority and trampling on all order; and they refused to condemn, as errors, principles taught in the Standards of the church, supreme and subordinate; and these were the real grounds, on account of which the Separatists tabled their *Declinature*, and abandoned the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In several instances, Dr. Paul and his friends seem to forget that the paper which they presented to Synod, and afterwards published, was a *Declinature* at all. As it even appeared in the newspapers, in some parts of it, the singular pronoun *I* was used, instead of *we*, the ringleader naturally enough, and quite in keeping with the egotism for which he is distinguished, breathing forth his own malevolence, and making the others who signed the paper with him mere puppets to grace his exhibition; and although this mode of speaking was altered, when

\* The topics advanced in the "*Declinature of the Eastern Presbytery*," were all brought forward,—most of them frequently,—in Dr. Paul's pamphlets, newspaper communications, and speeches and memorials in Synod. Many of them have been already discussed in the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," "*Christian Magistrate*," &c.

the *Declinature* appeared in a pamphlet form, still the crudeness and clumsiness of the form and arrangement are worthy of notice. From the Eastern Illuminati, who were perpetually boasting of their superior attainments, surely something less absurd might have been expected. Sometimes they speak in this paper as if *humbly petitioning* the court, and sometimes as if *tabling charges* against the Editors of the *Covenanter*.

Thus in sec. 2, p. 3, they say,—“This charge is an awful one;” and then they proceed formally to enumerate proofs. Again, at the close of sec. 5, p. 10, they say,—“with these bloody principles we charge Mr. Houston.” At the end of section 7, they address the Synod, in the style of humble petitioners, and say, “How he could do this, without the extirpation of the whole human family, we leave your reverend court to determine.” In the conclusion of sec. 11, p. 13, they say,—“We submit them (charges preferred against Mr. Houston) to the consideration of your reverend court, and entreat you to purge this leaven out of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.” Again, sec. 12, p. 14, they assume the attitude and language of suppliants,\*—“We implore your reverend court,” say they, “to repel this calumny, and to wipe off this foul stain from the Reformed Presbyterian Church.” And in sec. 15, p. 16, they say,—“these sentiments, we submit to your reverend court, are downright Popery.”

Here the inconsistency and irregularity of the reverend agitators and their followers, who issued the *Declinature*, must be apparent to every reader. The paper professes, as its very name imports, to cast off all subjection to the Synod,—all acknowledgment of its authority to judge and determine, and yet they submit to Synod the questions at issue, and call for its decision. How blinded are prejudice and passion! How inconsistent with themselves are the abettors of error and unscriptural liberty! The explanation of this anomalous feature of the *Declinature* is perhaps to be found in Dr. Paul's having before presented the same paper, in various forms, to Synod,—sometimes as a memorial, and again as a libel, with little more than the heading altered.† But certainly it might have been expected, that ere the Eastern Presbytery, asserting as they did peculiar claims to wisdom and superior enlightenment, took the solemn and important step of declining the Synod's authority, in a document that was to circulate far and wide, and to descend to posterity, they would have shown some respect to the ordinary forms of procedure; and from regard to their own consistency at least, would have evinced that they were

\* Was this mode of address of the Eastern Presbytery, to the Synod for which they had long shown marvellously little respect or reverence an oversight; or designed to be interpreted by the *rule of contraries*, like the man who, in violation of all law, divine and human, subscribes a challenge to fight a duel with the expression,—“*Your obedient humble servant*”?

† An aged and worthy Elder, at the close of the Synod's proceedings in 1838, when manifesting some impatience at having been so long needlessly detained, and at Dr. Paul's constant outcry for discussion,—properly characterized the Doctor's mode of reasoning in his speeches, pamphlets, &c., when he said the ideas and arguments were “*stereotyped*,” and that were they to wait ever so long the types would not alter!



not such slavish followers of Dr. Paul, as to adopt, without examination, his ridiculous blunders on points of order.

2. It is of much greater importance to notice the *matter* of the *Declinature*, as exhibiting the principles and spirit of its authors. To attempt fully to analyze its contents, or to reply to its foul charges, would far exceed the limits of the present pamphlet. In another publication we may notice more particularly such topics as have not already been answered in former works by the writer of this narrative.\* Meanwhile, we select a few topics for animadversion, which will give a pretty good specimen of the whole document. If we are compelled to employ, on some points, no very measured terms, it will be borne in mind, that we have to deal with those, who have, in the most reckless manner, and by the most unscrupulous means, assailed the principles and character of the Reformers, Martyrs, and other witnesses for truth, and who have left no stone unturned to destroy, in public estimation, the character of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In the very opening of the *Declinature*, the Eastern Presbytery show themselves perfectly reckless in their attempt to fasten the most odious sentiments on Mr. Houston, and to vilify the Synod. They charge Mr. Houston (p. 1.) with "calumniating our reforming forefathers, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, by representing Covenanters as sworn in the Covenants to extirpate not merely principles but persons,—not merely Popery and Prelacy, but Papists and Episcopalians; the members of the churches of Rome and England." This may be fairly marked calumny No. 1; and if the maxim of the poet be applied, "*ab uno disce omnes*,"—and it is not inapplicable to the *Declinature* of the Eastern Presbytery,—we may take this as a fair specimen of the whole document. Dr. Paul and the other Separatists forget to tell us, that Mr. Houston *repeatedly, solemnly, and indignantly* disavowed any such sentiment, and declared, in Synod, that he held the article in the Covenant about extirpation, according to the plain meaning of the words, to intend principles only. Candour would have stated, that such a disclaimer was made; but candour has nothing to do with the proceedings of schismatics and backsliders. How is this foul charge attempted to be sustained in the *Declinature*? Just by Dr. Paul's favourite mode of proof,—that which would make the Bible itself teach the most hateful sentiments,—*by garbled extracts*. There are sentences in the article in the *Covenant* (vol. iii. old series, pp. 79, 80.) from which Dr. Paul has quoted, in immediate connexion with those which he has given in the *Declinature*, that show that he has entirely misunderstood, or wilfully perverted the passage. Thus the writer declares the object of the paper, when he says,—“We shall deal first with the advocates of unbounded passive toleration, as a sentiment alleged not at variance with the present

\* Although many of the grievous charges preferred against Mr. Houston, and his writings, in the "*Declinature of the Eastern Presbytery*," have been already met and refuted in the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," "*Christian Magistrate*," &c., it is Dr. Paul's tact to take no notice of the replies, or explanations of the defenders of our testimony, and to reiterate the same absurd charges and calumnies, which have been a thousand times met and refuted.

clauses in our Covenants,"—p. 78. And again,—“That in the view we have taken of the term *extirpation*, as implying more than the use of moral means on the part of the civil magistrate, against Popery, Prelacy, Heresy, &c., we are going forth by the footsteps of the flock, &c. ;” and then there is adduced a quotation from the “Act, Declaration, and Testimony” of the Covenanting Church, in which the sentiment, that magistrates should only employ *moral means* in the coercion of gross heresy and idolatry, is protested against as an error.\* The plain and declared object of the writer was to protest against an *unbounded passive toleration* extended to all kinds of error or idolatry,—and to rebut the voluntary principle, that civil rulers should exercise no authority, but only employ moral means for the suppression of gross error and idolatry. Dr. Paul and some of his allies could not but be perfectly aware of this ; yet with a disingenuity and dishonesty that have seldom been surpassed, they make not the slightest reference to it. In order, in the very outset, to excite the utmost indignation against the doctrine of magistratical coercion,—a doctrine held by reformers of different names, and embodied in the doctrinal symbols of the Covenanting Church, they entirely suppress the truth, and represent Mr. Houston, and the venerable writer in the *Covenanter*, as teaching a doctrine, which they ever held in abhorrence.

As the charge is wholly false, so it is supported by similar means. It has been said, one lie requires two to support it. In the present instance, the adage is literally verified. At the close of the first section, the authors of the *Declinature* represent the Editor of the *Covenanter*, as publishing the sentiment on which they animadvert,—“knowing it to be a calumny,” and they add, “for on the floor of our Synod, in 1838, he publicly avowed that he admitted it into his periodical, in deference to a venerable member of our Synod, who is now no more.” Now, the plain intention here is to represent Mr. Houston, as admitting the truth of Dr. Paul’s allegation, and as trying to escape from it, by declaring, that though he was dissatisfied with the sentiment, he had deferred to a venerable father of the church, by inserting it in the periodical. This is a palpable misrepresentation. Mr. Houston stated, that he was willing to admit that the mode of expression, in that portion of the article in question, was not the happiest, and that the writer’s meaning was liable to be misunderstood, but that he had not used freedom with it, because of the deservedly high character of the venerable writer. But at the same time, he (Mr. H.) utterly repudiated the construction which Dr. Paul wished to force upon the passage,—and by quoting other expressions in the paper, he showed that the subject was altogether different from what he had represented.† And then, that a second

\* This is the church’s plain protestation against, and condemnation of, Dr. Paul’s avowed and oft-repeated sentiment.

† It was observable, when Dr. Paul, in his reply, in Synod in 1838, repeated the misrepresentation and distortion on this point, which have been transferred to the *Declinature*, that his manner of referring to the venerable father (Mr. Stewart) deceased, was most savage, and that his envenomed arrows might have a double aim, he turned round, and said, with gloated exultation,—“Now Mr. Houston lays it on a dead man.”



falsehood might not be wanting to support the first, the owners of the *Declinature* represent the obnoxious sentiment as raised from the grave, and "widely and wilfully circulated" by the Editor of the *Covenanter*. This takes for granted that Mr. Stewart held the extirpation of persons,—it in fact charges him with it. But the charge we know to be utterly groundless. That excellent man held no such opinion, and nothing that he has written in the paper in question, when candidly interpreted, will bear this construction. Dr. Paul is the man who has invented, and "widely circulated" the calumny, to injure the living and the dead,—the Editor of the former series of the *Covenanter*, and a venerable father of the church, now no more. To him, and to the other Separatists, may be applied, with a slight variation, their own words,—“That such a foul calumny, and defamation of principle and character, should be raised from the grave, where it had been buried with some of the former noted persecutors of the saints, and that it should be *widely and wilfully circulated* by persons formerly of the Covenanted church, but who have treacherously abandoned her testimony, and held it up to the scorn and derision of enemies, is most distressing.”\*

3. From a document which thus begins with a falsehood, nothing like fair candid statement may be expected. Accordingly, in the very next item, (article 2.) the Separatists endeavour to find Mr. Houston guilty of holding that *capital punishments* are to be applied by the Christian magistrate for the suppression of idolatry, and that the inhabitants of a city or town becoming Roman Catholics, are to be 'wholly destroyed, and the city or town made a heap for ever.' To this horrible misrepresentation, it might suffice to say, that Mr. Houston has always disclaimed, both in his writings and speeches, the doctrine of *capital punishments*. He always explicitly disavowed, making any statement of the particular kind of restraint or punishment, which the Christian magistrate is to apply to flagrant violators of the first table of the Decalogue; and for this simple reason, that the Standards of the church, while they unequivocally declare the *principle* of magistratical coercion, say nothing of the *mode*; and he had no wish to go, in any point, beyond the received symbols of the church. It would have been a grand point for Dr. Paul to excite odium, if he could have pushed Mr. Houston into such a specification; but, from first to last, in the controversy, he carefully abstained from it: and nothing but the most reckless distortion could serve to make out the foul charge contained in the second article of the *Declinature*. The quotations from the "Christian Magistrate" and the "Covenanter" teach the doctrine of magistratical coercion, of gross idolatry and heresy; but they say not a single word about the mode of punishment. They declare that Christian civil rulers have the same power, in relation to the guardian care of the different precepts of the decalogue, as had approved Jewish rulers,—but who

\* While the covenant speaks of the extirpation of *principles* not of *persons*, it undeniably teaches the doctrine of magistratical coercion of gross acts of false worship; for it requires every person, according to his station, and "the means competent thereto," to gainstand and abolish all false religion and worship. Is not the exercise of magistratical authority, a means competent to the Christian civil ruler?

does not see that assigning authority to a person is one thing, and the particular mode and circumstances of its exercise a thing totally different? They declare that "there is not a single hint given, in all the New Testament, that the judicial laws and judicial decisions under the Mosaic dispensations, were not to be referred to as examples for imitation in the Christian economy, when a similarity of circumstances might render such reference justifiable; nor that the laws against heresy, idolatry, blasphemy, Sabbath profanation, &c., are repealed, any more than those concerning robbery or murder."\* But Mr. Houston has repeatedly taught, as has Dr. Wardlaw, and as even Dr. Paul himself admits, that a law may remain binding, while the mode of its application, or the penalty, may alter.† The punishment of Sabbath profanation by the magistrate is a case in point. Even Dr. Paul admits that Sabbath profanation may still be a subject of magistratical coercion, while he would not grant that the *punishment of death*, which was awarded to the Sabbath-breaker under the Old Testament, should be visited on the transgressor.‡

Again, the authors of the *Declinature* obviously represent Mr. Houston, as teaching that the whole Judicial Code is still obligatory on Christian civil rulers, whereas, even in the passages

\* *Covenanter*, vol. i. O. Series,—p. 274, 275. In the use which Dr. Paul has repeatedly made of this quotation, we have a characteristic specimen of his disingenuity and sophistry. The *Covenanter* only declares that there is not a *hint* given in the New Testament that some judicial laws are repealed under the New Testament.

Instead of Dr. Paul attempting to show that such a "hint" is given in the New Testament Scriptures, or to prove the repeal of the laws against idolators, &c.,—and this was the only point with which he had to do here,—he constantly reasons as if the writer in the *Covenanter* had explicitly taught in the passage that the Judicial Laws are to be taken as models under the New Testament economy. This can be regarded as nothing but a barefaced perversion, or a discreditable sophism.

† "Moral laws, I admit, are immutable,—they are unalterable. No changes can take place in the *laws*, but changes may take place in the *penalties*, or in the *execution of the penalties*."—"*Covenanter Reviewed*," p. 54.

‡ "Besides those actions of Old Testament rulers, which proceeded on moral grounds, and which had for their object things which are substantially immutable, such as the support of public worship, and the prevention of blasphemy, profanation of the name of God, and sabbath-breaking; there is an application of their example in the way of *analogy*, which while it makes all allowances for the diversity of circumstances, and change of dispensation, proceeds upon a general resemblance in certain common principles and ends."—*M'Crie's Statement*, p. 122, 123.

"Although the institutions and examples of the Old Testament, of the duty of magistrates, in the things, and about the worship of God, are not, in their whole latitude and extent, to be drawn into rules; that should be obligatory on all magistrates, now under the administration of the Gospel; and that because the magistrates were then *castos vindex* and *administrator legis judicialis* and *politice Mosaicæ*, from which, as most think, we are freed;—yet doubtless, there is something in these institutions, which, being unclothed of their judicial form, is still binding to all the like kind, as to some analogy and proportion. Subtract from those administrations what was proper to, and lies upon the account of the *nation and church* of the Jews; and what remains upon the general notion of a church and nation; must be everlastingly binding, and this accounts for *at least*, that Judges, Rulers, and Magistrates, which are promised under the New Testament to be given in mercy, and to be singular in usefulness, as the Judges were under the Old, are to take care that the gospel church may, in all its concerns as such, be *supported* and promoted, and the truth propagated, wherewith they are entrusted."—*Dr. Owen* on Dan. vii. 15.



which they have quoted, the writer limits the laws, as do the eminent Divines, to those which guard the Decalogue, which are moral in their nature, and which are susceptible of application, to nations in different ages, and under every change of dispensation. The support of this heavy charge is made to rest principally on a quotation, in the *Christian Magistrate*, from the venerable reformer, John Knox, and on the reference to the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy, made by the author of the discourse, after the example of the Westminster Divines.\* What is the plain and simple inference? Is it not, that, according to Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery's showing, John Knox was a bigot and persecutor, whose principles on this subject deserve to be held in universal and everlasting abhorrence? Moreover, the *thirteenth of Deuteronomy* is the very passage quoted in the Westminster Confession, to prove the doctrine of magistratical coercion. It follows, as a matter of course, that the Westminster Divines and Confession, sanction intolerance and persecution, and that even the Scriptures themselves, or their glorious Author, are implicated in the same charge! When the Eastern Presbytery decline the Synod's authority, because they will not repudiate and condemn the abhorrent principles which they allege are contained in these quotations, they just ask the Synod to declare that the illustrious Knox was a man of blood,—a demon in human shape,—and that the Westminster Divines and Confession are deserving of condemnation and abhorrence. Whatever allegations Papists, Infidels, the advocates of arbitrary power, and other enemies of Scriptural principle and order, have advanced against the illustrious reformer, and the compilers of the Westminster Standards, they are far outstripped by the Separatists of the nineteenth century,—the men who, boasting perpetually of liberality, have disowned the authority of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, because of its bigotry and unfaithfulness! The church, however, will duly appreciate the character of the new-light which they would introduce. In its refulgence, not only Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod stand forth as objects of general condemnation; but Knox, and the Westminster Divines, are exhibited as most intolerant men, and their writings on the magistrates, power as deserving of the utmost abhorrence.

Proceeding in the work of demolition, and of aspersing the sentiments and character of the illustrious dead, who were yet owned of God, as eminent instruments of reformation, the authors of the *Declinature* characteristically exhibit a number of examples under the Old Testament, of the punishment of idolaters, &c., and endeavour to deduce the most frightful consequences from magistrates exercising their official care about religion, under the present economy. It deserves special remark, that all the instances quoted are represented by Dr. Paul in the *Declinature*, as flowing from

\* Another case of studied disingenuity and dishonesty, on the part of Dr. Paul and his *Declining* brethren, is always representing every expression in a quotation as if Mr. Houston expressly taught the sentiment contained in it, as if it were, in fact, his own words. This well serves the purpose of detraction. It keeps the hunted game on foot, while it furnishes a thin, though to those who would have it so, an effectual covering to screen his virulent enmity against the principles and characters of the most illustrious Reformers.

Knox's sentiment,—that the Judicial Laws, which are moral in their nature, stand, yet, “in the plenitude of moral obligation;” and that the cases are those which are referred to for proof, by the Westminster Divines, in support of the doctrines taught in chapters xx. xxiii. and xxxi. of the Confession. Is not the legitimate conclusion, therefore, that Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery ascribe all these monstrous consequences, which they have attempted to fasten on Mr. Houston and the *Covenanter*, upon the venerable Reformer and the Westminster Divines? Why did they not, as honest men, plainly declare this? Why did they come forward under a mask, and wear a rough garment to deceive? The answer is obvious,—it served the purpose of deception better. Some even of their own followers, would not have gone with them in violent and open assaults upon the Reformers and the Westminster Standards:—and loose as are the sentiments that are at present afloat on the surface of society, the religious public, generally, would indignantly resent the aspersions cast upon the honoured names of men, of whom the world was not worthy. It was their best policy to fight under a mask. Concealment was their safest course. But they have been too often in the field, and too virulent in their attacks, to keep their stratagems a secret. Their allies,—Voluntaries, Radicals, and Infidels,—have spoken out so plainly, employing the same kind of abuse, and deducing the same forced and monstrous consequences, that the Eastern Presbytery can only hope henceforth to be known as among the most disingenuous and virulent assailants of principles and characters that the Reformed Presbyterian Church will always hold in high veneration.

One remark may suffice to show the entire fallacy of the reasoning in the *Declinature*, from the instances of Jewish rulers referred to,—Moses, Jehu, Josiah, and Nehemiah.\* Dr. Paul constantly takes cases, which were plainly *special* and *extraordinary*, or *peculiar*, under the former economy; and reasons as if they were among the ordinary features and characteristics of that dispensation. Thus the command to Moses to punish the idolatry of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 27.) was evidently special;† so was the commission given to Jehu to destroy

\* Is it in ridicule that Dr. Paul speaks of Nehemiah cursing Sabbath-breakers, &c., and plucking off their hair, with Divine approbation,—and alleging that Mr. Houston's doctrine is, that the Christian magistrate should “*curse* the people that violate God's law by marrying Papists”? Does Dr. P. not know that the word *curse*, as used in such cases in sacred Scripture, has quite a different meaning from that in which it is commonly used now? To what miserable shifts will new-light sentiments urge their votaries in perverting the Word of God.

† In the “*Covenanter Reviewed*,” p. 49—Dr. Paul represents the consecration of the Priests and Levites under the Mosaic economy to have been, by the shedding of the blood of their nearest relatives.—“The ministers of religion, under the legal economy, were consecrated by the effusion of blood,—by imbruing their hands in the blood of their own sons, their dearest friends and nearest relatives; whilst the blessed Author of our holy religion set apart his Apostles to their sacred function by breathing on them, and giving a divine commission, accompanied with appropriate instructions.” The sophism of applying the term *consecration*, used on a special sense and extraordinary occasion, to the ordinary dedication of the ministers of the sanctuary, need not be pointed out: it is however characteristic of Dr. Paul's reasoning. Such a representation of the former economy is most unfounded and injurious.



the house of Ahab.\* The destruction of the Canaanites was a special and extraordinary visitation, for which Joshua and the Israelites had a direct special commission from heaven. Dr. Paul, in the "*Covenanter Reviewed*," reasons as if these instances were among the ordinary features of the legal economy, and so do the authors of the *Declinature*. Admit this, and then we are wholly unable to see how the infidel, and frequently advanced, objection can be refuted. The author of inspiration,—the God of Israel, is evidently charged with cruelty. Let any one who has perused any of the writings of infidels against the Old Testament, read pages 4, 5, 6, 7, of the *Declinature*, and he cannot but remark the similarity of impression they are calculated to make; and he will be surprised to find the Eastern Presbytery, in their vehemence against Mr. Houston, the *Covenanter*, and the Reformed Synod, furnishing, unintentionally, no doubt, matter for ribaldry and calumny, in the objections of Deists against the Bible and the God of the Bible. The sophistry is exposed, and the delusion vanishes, when we consider that there are parts of the conduct of the Jewish rulers, of an extraordinary and special character, and other parts in which, in a general sense, they were designed to be examples to future rulers among a reformed people under every dispensation. Of this last kind was evidently their guardian care of the precepts of the Divine law, and the official restraint and correction of crimes openly committed against the Divine Majesty, the interests of true religion, and the peace and well-being of the commonwealth. Mr. Houston never pleaded for the Jewish rulers being taken as examples to Christian magistrates, in any other sense than this; and all the reasoning of Dr. Paul and his separating brethren, taken from extraordinary parts of the official conduct of Jewish rulers, is wholly irrelevant, except to their favourite object,—to keep up delusion, and to destroy the reputation of Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod. It is not, nor was it ever Mr. Houston's doctrine, "that Christian rulers should do, as did Moses, Joshua, Jehu, and Nehemiah," in special, extraordinary cases. Nothing but a direct commission and command from heaven could justify such a course. Where has he ever taught such a sentiment? These often repeated and barefaced assertions must just be classed among the unblushing falsehoods of men, who, sensible that they could not prevail against the truth, and who, mortified that their schemes were not succeeding according to their wish, employ their official station and the name of religion, to propagate slander of the worst kind.

4. In the Fourth Article of the *Declinature*, we have another characteristic instance of the disingenuous and unscrupulous treatment which Dr. Paul gives to Mr. Houston, and the fathers of the Covenanting Church. In the *Christian Magistrate*, p. 81, an expression from the Auchinsauigh Covenant is quoted, not for the

\* On what ground Dr. Paul adduces the case of Jehu, in declaiming against the *Covenanter* and *Christian Magistrate*, we are at a loss to conceive, save that it helped him to render the picture somewhat darker, and that is sufficient for such a logician as the Doctor. The Editor of the *Covenanter*, in pleading the examples of Jewish rulers in some parts of their official conduct, only spoke of *approved* and *godly* rulers, and clearly Jehu possessed not this character.

purpose of saying any thing concerning the question of the Penal Laws,—but to show that our forefathers who renewed the British Covenants at Auchinsburgh, in 1712, held the doctrine of magistral coercion of gross error, idolatry, and blasphemy. Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, however, tell the public that the author of the *Christian Magistrate* “maintains still farther that the penal laws enacted against Papists ought to be executed in their full extent and latitude;” and again, “he laments that these laws are not executed.” It will be distinctly borne in mind that the Auchinsburgh Renovation has always been regarded with approbation in the Covenanting Church: the transaction is mentioned in the Fourth Term of Communion; and an express approval of it, as far as consistent with the original Covenants, is required of all intrants into the church, and of all members going to the Lord’s table. This approval has been understood to refer to the acknowledgment of sins, and engagement to duties, as well as to the Covenants, adapted as they were to the circumstances of the swearers. The Scottish Reformed Synod declare, —“Those who approve of the original Covenants themselves, cannot consistently deny the propriety of the Auchinsburgh Renovation, seeing it must be obvious to every one who hath properly perused that deed, that there is not the least substantial alteration.”\* It follows, according to this judgment of the Scottish Synod, that Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery do not consistently hold the original Covenants, National and Solemn League, since they suffer no opportunity to pass without a thrust at the Auchinsburgh Renovation. Into any explanation of the views of the Auchinsburgh Covenanters, on the subject of the *penal laws*, it is not necessary that we should enter. The Reformed Synod, in the “Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion,” have offered such explanations, as are sufficient to satisfy every unprejudiced person, who values sound Protestant principle. The Eastern Presbytery, on the other hand, have shown, in their garbled quotations from the laws which were enacted in the reforming period, and dwelling upon these exclusively, how truly they have learned to copy the slang of Infidels, and Jesuits, in their attempts to represent our reforming ancestors as men of a bloody and intolerant spirit, and as abetting persecution when in power, as did the worst persecutors under the Romish Antichrist. Candid writers of different names have generally admitted that the laws enacted against idolaters in the reforming times, though severe, were necessary as a means of self-defence,—the lives and properties of the Reformers,—and, what was dearer to them, the best interests of the church and kingdom, being exposed to the insidious and restless attempts of Jesuits, and other devoted minions of Antichrist. Such eminent writers as Dr. M’Crie, Bruce, Stevenson, and even Aikman, though an Independent, have, on this and similar grounds, vindicated the enactment of the penal laws referred to. Surely it might have been expected, that professed Covenanters would not have been behind others, in defending the much vilified principles and characters of the Reformers. But we mistake the march of liberality:—or to speak plainly, the down-hill course of defection will allow men to see nothing good in the principles and conduct of

\* Explanation and Defence of Terms of Communion.—p. 186.—Belfast Edition.



the fathers of the church. It can find no mantle of kindness to cover their injured names, no apology or defence for acts to which they were impelled by the stern necessity of the times, and for which they have had to endure the unmitigated hatred of an evil world.

With respect to the necessity or use of penal laws, we have only to say that we agree with the sentiment of the Scottish Reformed Synod, and with the excellent Professor Bruce of Whitburn, in his work entitled "Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery,"\* in which he pleads for the necessity of penal restraints, to prevent the aggressions of the Man of Sin. Even distinguished modern statesmen have admitted, that, in certain conditions of society, penal laws may still be required, as a necessary means of self-defence against the attempts of Romanists to obtain universal ascendancy, and to effect the destruction of Protestant institutions and privileges.† Into this topic, however, it is not required that we should enter farther, at present. The assault upon Mr. Houston and the *Christian Magistrate*, in this particular, it will be remembered, is directly against our Auchinsburgh fathers, and the Covenanting Church, for yielding an approval of the memorable transaction in which they were engaged. The plain meaning of the views advanced in this part of the *Declinature*, is that the Reformers of Scotland, who enacted laws in defence of Protestantism, and their faithful descendants who have approved of their pious zeal and holy devotedness, are to be regarded as "Inquisitors," — "persecutors," — intolerant, blood-thirsty oppressors. Beyond all question, no other judgment can be formed of them, by those whose reading on the subject is, unhappily, restricted to the late writings of Dr. Paul and his adherents. Such is the liberality of the Dr. and the Eastern Presbytery, — such their regard to the fences which heroic, godly men raised around the Scottish Reformation!

5. The next article in the *Declinature* contains some precious samples of Dr. Paul's sophistry and misrepresentation. Wishing to bring in Mr. Houston guilty of holding that all heretics should be put to death, he reasons thus: In the *Covenanter*, Arminianism had been termed a "*pestilential, soul-destroying heresy*." "Now," says Dr. Paul, "if Arminianism be a pestilential, soul-destroying heresy, Arminians are pestilential, soul-destroying heretics." As Dr. Paul is mighty fond of logic, and takes no little pains to trumpet his pretensions on this head, it might be enough to require him to state the syllogism of which this is the conclusion. But as we are plain men, and write for plain people, it is sufficient to say that the consequence by which Dr. Paul supports his charge, and without which it utterly fails, is altogether inconclusive. A heresy may be of the worst character, and yet the person who holds it may not be, as far as society is concerned, — and this is the point under consideration, — a pestilent, soul-destroying heretic. He may keep his error deep-hid in his own breast. It is at least supposable, that, in some instances, as we believe is the case with some Arminian missionaries, a man may have little occasion or inducement to refer to the peculiarities of his own system, and may

\* See "Free Thoughts," &c. — pp. 261, 262, &c.

† See Speech of J. Emerson Tennent, Esq., M.P., on the Repeal of the Union.

teach the Gospel of free and efficacious grace. And there are several other cases, in which a person may be nominally in the ranks of heresy, and yet be, in society, comparatively innocuous, and in some points of his deportment an estimable man. Dr. Paul and his clerical fellow-separatists, could not fail to know the distinction between a pestilent, soul-destroying *heresy*, and a pestilent, soul-destroying *heretic*; and yet to effect their favourite object of bringing in the Editor of the *Covenanter* and the Reformed Synod, chargeable with the most monstross sentiments, they wilfully confound the two, and represent Mr. Houston teaching what, in no instance, he ever asserted. It is a palpable falsehood, that he ever declared Arminians to be "pestilent, soul-destroying heretics;" yet take away this, and the reference to the *thirteenth of Deuteronomy*, one of the passages quoted in the Westminster Confession, in support of the doctrine of magistratical coercion, and in fact the whole argument in this part of the *Declinature*, falls to the ground.\*

The quotation from the "*Reviewer Reviewed*," p. 54, by which Dr. Paul attempts to find the author of that pamphlet guilty of maintaining, that heretics, and false prophets and idolaters are identical, is just another instance of his sophistry, and suppression of the truth. All that was taught in the passage referred to was, that, in some cases, heretics and false prophets are to be viewed as the same. This does not hinder but that in other respects they may differ. So a person who is a false prophet, may be likewise an idolater. Had the whole passage in the "*Reviewer Reviewed*" been fairly quoted, this would be apparent,—but it would not suit Dr. Paul's purpose to let Mr. Houston speak in explanation of his own views, and therefore he mangles the quotation. That the false prophet under the law, and the false teacher and heretic under the Gospel, are to be regarded as, in some respects, identical, is apparent from 2 Peter ii. 1.—"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies," &c. And in the view given, in the book of Revelation, of Antichrist, it is evident that that complex system of iniquity is regarded, as at once the false prophet, blasphemy, heresy and idolatry. It would not, of course, suit the liberality of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery to call Popery, idolatry; and to trace an identity or similarity of character between Antichrist and idolaters, and seducing prophets, might subject them, with not a few of their admirers, to the imputation of intolerance and bigotry. Nevertheless the spirit of truth has sanctioned such a mode of interpretation, and it is familiar with the most eminent expositors: but Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod must, at all events, be stigmatized in every form that is odious and revolting.

\* This jugglery of interchanging the *abstract* for the *concrete*,—principles for persons, and *vice versa*, is frequently practised by Dr. Paul, to help forward his misrepresentations and perversions. Thus, while in the Loughmourne Memorial and in the *Declinature*, he reasons, that heresy and heretics, idolatry and idolaters, are the same, one of his heaviest charges against Mr. Houston is, that he would make Popery and Prelacy to mean Papists and Episcopalians,—and in the remarks of the Eastern Presbytery on the Synod's overture, we have several choice specimens of the same species of sophistry. The jugglery however is easily detected, and the master-conjurer, to support his pretensions, must betake himself to some other shift.



6. The next charge in the *Declinature* (No. 6,) holds Mr. Houston guilty of investing the civil magistrate with *arbitrary powers*, and of maintaining that these powers would be employed for the infliction of the most capricious and severe punishments. How is this sustained? Because the author of the *Christian Magistrate*, and *Reviewer Reviewed* had, for reasons already stated, refused to declare what particular kind of restraint or punishment should be applied to the grossly erroneous or idolatrous, and had alleged that this might be left to the "Christian wisdom" of the magistrate, and would be a question for the judges, possessed of Scriptural qualifications in a reformed nation, the Separating gentlemen thus leap to their conclusion,—“Now, according to this doctrine, the judge might order Papists or heretics to be either hanged, burnt, or flayed alive. He might inflict upon them all the tortures invented either by the Sicilian tyrants or the Popish Inquisitors.”\* Now, good reader, just ask how these monstrous consequences follow from the principles, which Mr. Houston had laid down in the passages quoted, and in others which stand in immediate connexion with them? The author of the *Christian Magistrate* constantly pleads for the civil ruler being under the influence of Christian principles, and for his official conduct, and that of the judges being directed by the divine law, and by righteous laws founded on the Word of God; and in this particular case, he expressly says that the kind of restraint or punishment is to be determined by “the *Christian wisdom* of the magistrate.” Yet all this the Eastern Presbytery, in their *Declinature*, wilfully overlook, and dishonestly suppress, and instead of regarding the Christian magistrate or judge, as a man guided by Christian wisdom, directed by God’s law, and actuated by a Christian spirit, they represent him, when left to the direction of “Christian wisdom,” as a capricious tyrant. What is this but impugning the wisdom of God, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace, who may influence men in power as well as others? If a Christian, in the spirit of the youthful Solomon, would ask and obtain wisdom from on high, and if he proceed to apply it in his administration, according to Dr. Paul, he must all at once be transformed into a Sicilian tyrant, or a Popish Inquisitor! To utter such reckless falsehood is lightly regarded by men, whose darling aim has been to trample under foot the principles, and make utter havoc of the reputation of the Church.

7. The *Declinature* improves in bitterness, as it advances. Mr. Houston is charged with holding a principle, the tendency of which would be to extirpate every sect and denomination of Christians, who differ from him in religion;—nay, even with holding principles that would extirpate the whole human family,—with maintaining the propriety of propagating the true religion with the magistrate’s sword,—with advocating the employment of force to make men religious,—with gross Erastianism, &c. The satisfaction is, that malevolence, when so glaring, defeats itself, and the innocent victim escapes uninjured. The Eastern Separatists have fairly overshot the mark,—they have out-Heroded Herod. The church, and many of the candid religious public, have already regarded these violent and extravagant charges, as

\* *Declinature*, p. 10. sect. 6.

the breathings of insatiable malice, towards Mr. Houston; and while he has experienced sympathy and friendship from the lovers of the good old way, to which his humble efforts presented no title, the same persons have not hesitated to class those who have reiterated these foul charges, with the persecutors of a former period.

The reasoning in sections 7, 8, 9, in which the Eastern Presbytery attempt the proof of these extravagant charges, is most sophistical; and the conclusions which they endeavour to draw from passages in the "*Christian Magistrate*," "*Reviewer Reviewed*," and "*Covenanter*," are utterly unwarranted. According to their usual method of dishonest concealment, the writers of the *Declinature* have taken no notice of the numerous passages of these pamphlets, in which the author has strongly and indignantly disclaimed the sentiment that *simple error* is an object of penal infliction by the civil ruler, or that dissenters from the established religion, when they are otherwise peaceful members of the community, are to be punished,—in which the propagation of religion by force is markedly condemned,—and in which the strongest protests are uttered against every species of Erastianism.\* Surely the kind, generous, honourable gentlemen of the East, might have afforded, at least once, to have told their people and the public, that Mr. Houston had repeatedly disclaimed, and condemned the doctrines, with which they had branded him, and the Reformed Synod. But by doing this, they would have greatly narrowed the ground of their "*Protest and Declinature*," and would have scattered the mists of delusion which themselves had raised; and they would not have appeared so redoubted champions of civil and religious liberty,† as they wish to be esteemed.

\* "The nation has avouched the Lord to be their God, and the magistrate is God's minister, while he is civil head of the state, and therefore is he bound to vindicate the Divine honour, and to promote the church's welfare. It is in this view,—in relation to a nation and a magistracy thus constituted alone, and considered as *civil offences*, that idolatry and blasphemy, heresy and Sabbath-profanation, should be subjected to outward punishment." Christ. Magist. pp. 59, 60.

It is added in the same part of the discourse,—“It is not heresy or idolatry in the mind, but heresy or idolatry *publicly avowed*, propagated, and obstinately persevered in, that calls for punishment. Men may hold what opinions they please, and the Christian magistrate may safely suffer them to live unmolested.” And to guard against misrepresentation,—the following note is given, in connexion with these explanations,—in reference to the former of these quotations: “This statement, which is intended to lie at the foundation of all our reasonings on the subject of magistratical interference for the suppression of gross heresy, blasphemy, &c., it will be readily seen, removes many of the futile, though plausible objections that are advanced against our doctrine. It is the duty of a *Christian magistrate*, possessed of due scriptural qualifications, and ruling over a *reformed nation*, that we have attempted to exhibit throughout the discourse. If any choose to make a different application of our arguments, they do it at the hazard of putting upon our language a construction which it will by no means bear, and of perverting reasoning which they are unable to refute.”—Christ. Magist. Note, p. 60. How few of those who receive, as Gospel, the perversions and calumnies of Dr. Paul, and the Eastern Presbytery, have ever thought that there are such expressions as these in the "*Christian Magistrate*"!

† It is related by Alison, in his "*History of the French Revolution*," that the Paris mob,—the sovereign people, were mightily offended with La Fayette, then the commander of the National Guard, for punishing one of the wretches who had hung up an unfortunate baker to a lamp post,—and that they fiercely denounced him for abridging their liberty in saying or doing what they pleased,—and especially in



The passages in the "*Christian Magistrate*," and "*Reviewer Reviewed*," about the magistrate's restraining whatever endangers the "church's peace," and "tarnishes the divine glory," taken in their proper connexion, just teach that crimes openly committed against the first table of the decalogue, are to be restrained; and that those gross public offences which endanger the church's peace and safety, and which manifestly rob God, the moral governor of the nation, of his honour and glory, are proper objects of magistratical coercion. It is expressly laid down as fundamental in the "*Christian Magistrate*"—(see pages 59, 60, 61),—that the civil ruler is to restrain and punish violations of the first table of the law, not "merely as breaches of the divine law, and not as ecclesiastical scandals;" and that it is only in the case of open, gross, and dangerous offences that he is to interfere. Whatever other meaning Dr. Paul extorts from isolated or distorted passages, the author wholly disclaims. Let the Eastern Separatists fairly bring forward the principles which Mr. Houston has assumed as fundamental in the discussion of the question, or brought forward in the course of the argument, and the injustice of their partial quotations and forced conclusions, will be apparent to the most superficial reader. This, however, we can easily predict, they will never do. When the *Hugonots* of France were to be utterly exterminated, their savage persecutors found it much more convenient to represent them, as monsters having only a part of the human form, than to bring forward their principles, and refute them. How closely the enemies of a faithful testimony agree in their tactics in different ages! To spread delusion and keep up prejudice against Mr. Houston, and important articles of the church's confession, are more to the taste of Dr. Paul and his associates, than fair reasoning; and having long practised this trade, they may be expected to pursue it to the end, verifying the Scriptural declaration, concerning some who "*wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*"

The reasoning in the *Declinature*, to prove Mr. Houston chargeable with maintaining that the true religion is to be *propagated* by the sword\* of the civil magistrate, is of precisely the same character as that which we have just noticed. By keeping out of view all the qualifying clauses in the passages quoted from the "*Covenanter*," and foisting in such a consequence as this,—"*If he have a right to require men to become Christians, he has a right to enforce the requisition by pains and penalties,*" Dr. Paul, or the subscribers of the *Declinature*, conceive they have proved this point to admiration. As a single specimen of dishonest mangling of quotations, of which many might be given, we subjoin the passages in full, as they stand in the *Covenanter*, in immediate connexion with the garbled extracts in the *Missive* of the Eastern Separatists.

summarily putting to death whoever offended them. Quere? Is it pleading for a liberty of this kind that entitles a person, now-a-days, to be enrolled under the banner of civil and religious liberty? And furthermore, is the murder of character one of the special prerogatives of the advocates of civil and religious liberty?

\* In this part of the *Declinature*, the word *sword* is evidently used in *terrorem*, and to excite odium against the "*Covenanter*" and its Editor, as it is in innumerable other passages of Dr. Paul's writings.

In the *Covenanter*, vol. ii. p. 7, 8, the following sentences occur, connected with two of the garbled extracts :—

“ Nobody complains of being obliged to be honest, or of being restrained for murder, robbery, perjury, or any other crime which would unhinge society ; why then should the restraining of daring irreligion and profaneness by the magistrate be accounted oppressive, since the obligations of religion are as clearly revealed as those of morality, and the transgressions of the first table as injurious to society, as those of the second table of the moral law ? ”

“ The plea, that there are various sects and denominations among Christians, and consequently that all of them cannot be right, is no valid excuse in refusing to profess and support *the true religion* ; for there were also various sects, as Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, &c., among the Jews, who were all obliged to contribute to the support of the established religion, notwithstanding their diversity of opinion.” Here the writer is arguing—in opposition to Voluntarism—in favour of national support of the true religion, and this is the principal object in the passage. Yet one would never think, from the quotations in the *Declinature*, that such a matter had been mentioned at all. And the very next words in the *Covenanter*, in a sentence of which the Eastern Presbytery has thought proper only to give a part, show that the *Covenanter* is not quite so illiberal as its enemies would have us to believe. It is said, “ the Christian magistrate, ruling over his subjects with paternal care, may, as he unquestionably should, allow the freest exercise of *private judgment*, and he may not call into exercise his authority to settle points of difference between those who acknowledge Christ the Head, relative to order and worship.” The magistrate’s “ duty in seeing that pure Christianity be publicly professed by his subjects,” relates to his providing the means of religious instruction, and it is added, “ his suppressing immorality, idolatry, and gross error and false religion, is perhaps the best establishment he can give to the true ; for as *it* is already sanctioned and established by a higher authority than that of man, it only requires the approbation, protection, and support of the civil power, in that nation or kingdom into which it has been introduced.”

Again, in the *Covenanter*, (vol. i. p. 232,) the following statements are made, in a sentence of which the *Declinature* quotes about the *one-fifth* :—“ In discriminating between works that are morally good or evil, or between those which should be encouraged and those which should be suppressed, Covenanters imagine—that it is the duty of Civil Magistrates, or of nations acting by their rulers,\* to profess, establish, and support the true religion ; to exert their influence and authority, that it may be received and professed by all within their dominions ; to enact wise and salutary laws for its encouragement and protection ; and to see that its min-

\* In this passage, Christian magistrates are viewed, as they are always throughout the “ *Covenanter*,” and “ *Christian Magistrate*,” as the nation’s representatives, or as having the national sovereignty lodged in them,—and their labouring to remove impediments out of the way of a profession of the true religion, is just the nation recognising the prime obligation of the Divine law,—to avouch the Lord to be their God. How carefully does Dr. Paul keep back all such views advanced in Mr. Houston’s writings, that he may represent him as a monster of persecution, and the Christian magistrate as a capricious and cruel tyrant !



isters be suitably supported, and its ordinances regularly dispensed." Will any candid person now say that the garbled extracts in the *Declinature*, are a just representation of the sentiments of the *Covenanter*? Will it be affirmed, even by any honourable Voluntary,—that the passages which we have given teach,—as the Eastern sages would have it,—“That the religion of Jesus Christ should be propagated by the sword of the civil magistrate?” They simply state the grand principles on which the Scottish reformation was promoted and established. They expressly admit the fullest exercise of the right of private judgment. When mention is made of “requiring a profession” of the Christian religion, and of requiring men to “support” it, there is not the least hint given of the magistrate employing force for this purpose; and in one of the passages, it is expressly declared, that the magistrate’s coercive power is limited to the suppression of whatever is grievously prejudicial to the interests of true religion. The candid reader will judge, after this specimen of quotations by the Eastern Presbytery, what weight is due to their testimony, in their dishonourable work of sapping and undermining the pillars of the Reformation. Thus speaks Dr. M’Crie,—than whom none more clearly understood or stated the duty of civil rulers, with respect to religion:—“It is his (the magistrate’s,) duty to watch over the church’s external interests, and to exert himself in his station to preserve upon the minds of his subjects an impression of its obligations and sanctions, and to suppress irreligion, impiety, profanity, and blasphemy. It is also the duty of civil rulers, and must be their interest, to exert themselves to introduce the Gospel into their dominions, when it may be but partially enjoyed; and by salutary laws and encouragements to provide them with the means of instruction, and a settled dispensation of ordinances; especially in poor and desolate, or in ignorant and irreligious parts of the country;—all which they may do, without propagating Christianity by the sword, or forcing a profession of religion on their subjects by penal laws.”—Statement, p. 80.

8. The allegation about Mr. Houston’s Civil Magistrate forcing men to be religious, (*Declinat.* sec. 9. p. 12.) rests upon as sandy a foundation as any that we have already noticed. The instance of the exercise of official authority by Asa was, in part, *special*, and partly, in the *mode* of punishment threatened, there was the full carrying out of the inflictions of the judicial law.—Mr. Houston has never pleaded that, in such cases, or to such extent, the conduct of Jewish rulers is to be taken as an example to Christian magistrates.

Section 10th of the *Declinature*, in which Mr. Houston’s Civil Magistrate is arraigned of appointing and deposing church officers, and regulating public worship, furnishes another sad instance of the profane flippancy with which Dr. Paul’s writings against Scriptural magistracy, and ecclesiastical establishments abound. If David, “with Divine approbation,” as the Separatists allege, “appointed church officers and regulated public worship,”—and Solomon, under the same high sanction, deposed church officers; and if in Dr. Paul’s estimation, such an exercise of magistratical power is unwarranted, “Erastian and oppressive,”

then it must follow that these *eminent princes acted as Erastian oppressors in the things of religion, and even that God himself sanctioned such procedure!!* Such is the length to which enmity against the testimony of the church will conduct men! If Erastianism is sinful now, it was sinful also under the former economy; and to charge the Jewish magistrates, when acting with Divine approbation, with it, as Dr. Paul has frequently done, in reality amounts to making God the author of sin. Those parts of the conduct of the reforming princes of Israel and Judah which were extraordinary, have nothing to do with the argument, and it were no difficult matter to show, that, in some of the instances referred to, they may have acted without infringing, in any measure, on the proper limits of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.\* But all this is unnecessary. The shortest way for Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, in their vehemence against Mr. Houston and the Synod, is to charge the godly princes of Israel with Erastianism and oppression, and make God, whose vicegerents they were, and who approved of their holy zeal in his service, the author of sin! When they can advance this length, it is high time to consider argument with them as at an end; and to leave them in undisputed possession of their triumph.

9. In section 11th, of the *Declinature*, the Eastern Presbytery charge Mr. Houston and the *Covenanter* with teaching sentiments grossly *Erastian*, and they adduce some quotations, which had been given from celebrated divines, in an early number of the periodical, in support of the allegation. The same charge had been advanced by Dr. Paul, in his first attack in the *Newsletter*, and in his pamphlet entitled, *The Covenanter Reviewed*, &c., and precisely the same passages were quoted to substantiate it,—a proof among many, that the Eastern Separatists, in putting forward this part of the *Declinature*, allowed themselves to be dragged through the mire by Dr. Paul, and have slavishly adopted his vituperation. Dr. Paul's charge of *Erastianism* against the *Covenanter* is fully considered in the *Reviewer Reviewed*, chapter v.; and although the Eastern Presbytery have judged it prudent to take no notice of the reasoning there adduced, we hesitate not to affirm that Dr. Paul, and his coadjutors are wholly unable to refute the arguments contained in that chapter,—arguments which show clearly the utter groundlessness of the charge of Erastianism against the periodical, the dishonesty of Dr. Paul as a reviewer, and his spiteful opposition to the views of the Reformers. As our space will not permit us to give the reasoning of the *Reviewer Reviewed* on this point at length, we may be excused for subjoining a brief outline of it.

The author first showed that it was common for erroneous persons to charge with Erastianism those who stood forward in behalf

\* Under the Jewish economy, care was employed to separate between the exercise of civil and ecclesiastical authority,—and we have no evidence that there was any undue interference in the reforming times of the one with the other. In the days of Jehoshaphat, Amaziah, the chief priest, was over the people “in all matters of the Lord,”—and Zebadiah, “for all the king's matters.” Was this like Erastianism?



of Scriptural order. The Remonstrants had advanced it against the Orthodox Synod of Dort,—the Independents had charged the venerable Westminster Assembly with Erastianism,—and when the Secession body in Scotland, in the commencement of the present century, abandoned the testimony of their fathers, the back-sliding part had frequently and vehemently charged with Erastianism Dr. M'Crie, and the excellent men who with him resisted sweeping innovation. Then an outline of the principles of Erastianism, as stated by Dr. M'Leod, was given, and it was shown that in no instance had the *Covenanter* ever advanced a single Erastian sentiment. On the contrary, the periodical had repeatedly testified against the system as a whole, exhibited its evils as they exist in various sections of the church, and vindicated the independence of the church against the encroachments of civil rulers. Then, the passages quoted in the *Declinature*, and given there as if they had been written by the Editor or his correspondents, were stated to have been quotations from the writings of such eminent men as an Assembly of Presbyterian Covenantee Ministers in London,\* Archbishop Ussher, Samuel Rutherford, and George Gillespie; and that they were adduced, not for the purpose of expressing either agreement or disagreement with every sentiment contained in them,—but merely to show that the employment of magisterial authority for suppressing gross heresy and idolatry, is not at variance with the opinions of the ablest advocates of Reformation principles. It was even admitted that the mode of statement or illustration, in other parts of the quotations, might be objectionable. But it was shown that Dr. Paul's charge of Erastianism was in reality laid against the London Covenantee Ministers,—against the illustrious Rutherford, who had written much and testified faithfully against Erastian usurpation, and had died, banished from his flock, the victim of Erastian supremacy,—against the faithful Gillespie, who had in the Westminster Assembly pleaded against the learned Selden, the cause of the church's independence,—and against the excellent Livingstone, who had suffered through his whole life from Erastian oppression, and who had always witnessed a good confession in opposition to it. To charge such men with Erastianism, was what few even of their most determined revilers would hazard, since all history would belie the absurd allegation. It appeared much easier for Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery to make the attack on Mr. Houston and the *Covenanter*, under cover of a masked battery. But, they may rest assured, the church and the public are not deceived. The object of the assault is in reality the Covenantee reformers and martyrs. Even admitting the mode of expression, in some of the quotations, was not the happiest,—it was only by ignorantly or wilfully perverting the meaning of the language of the illustrious Divines, whose sentiments Dr. Paul has held up to odium and derision, that he has attempted to wring out of their words a sense which they will by no means bear. To this reason-

\* Held about the time of the Westminster Assembly, and the same that emitted an excellent work on the "Divine Right of Presbyterian Church Government,"—in which the limits of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction are accurately and clearly stated,—and the duties of church officers and magistrates are detailed in a circumstantial and scriptural manner.

ing we have nothing at present to add. It stands unrefuted; and we venture to predict, that Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery will pour torrents of reproach upon Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod, before they attempt to meet it. Meanwhile, all that we consider it requisite to say for ourselves, as often as they charge us with Erastianism, is, that we are, in the same sense, and no further Erastian; than were our illustrious forefathers, who lived and died oppressed by Erastian civil rulers, and testifying, with their latest breath, against the unhallowed and unscriptural usurpation.

10. The next charge (No. 12, of the *Declinature*,) about Mr. Houston's *monstrous tithe system*, so often reiterated in Dr. Paul's speeches and pamphlets, is almost too ridiculous to merit serious exposure. It is *not true*, as the *Declinature* alleges, that the Editor of the *Covenanter* claims "for the clergy, and for the support of religion, all that has ever been given, or shall, in times coming, be given for the use of the kirk." He has indeed pleaded for a *national support* to the church of Christ, in opposition to Voluntaries and Infidels, and in the part of the *Covenanter* referred to, he has quoted two or three passages from the First and Second Books of Discipline, which have always been regarded with approbation in the Covenanting Church, and the latter of which, as Dr. M'Crie testifies,\* was sworn to in the National Covenant, and is to be considered of standing authority in the church. These quotations were offered merely to prove that Covenanters had always pleaded for a state-support of the true religion, without any, the least hint being given, that the particular *mode* of support mentioned in them should be again resorted to. On the contrary, it had been shown immediately before, that while a state-taxation might be applied to the support of religious ordinances, in the unevangelised parts of a country, in other parts, each congregation would support its own pastor, without any burden to the State.— "Were he (the magistrate) to act thus, we think it evident that the community would have no cause to complain of being burdened by the pecuniary support of the national religion; as in this case, it is presumed, where the ordinances of religion were regularly administered, each congregation would support its own pastor, and a tax to send the Gospel to the unevangelised portions of the country, would be considered by none as a grievance."† It was only by Dr. Paul's usual discreditable method of concealing these and similar statements entirely, that he arrives at another of his charges, by which he hopes to excite odium against Mr. Houston. The author of the *Christian Magistrate* neither desires Tithe nor Regium Donum, nor a state-allowance in any shape, from a corrupt government. He has frequently protested against endowments of this kind; and he trusts he may say, more on Covenanting principles, than Dr. Paul in his published objections to Tithe and Regium Donum. Nor does he prostitute the humble talents that God has given, to earn golden opinions from Papists, Arians and Infidels. There are some men that declaim furiously against a state-endowment to the ministers of religion, who yet have no objections to receive the rewards of defection, from hands as defiled as any that

\* Statement, p. 44.

† *Covenanter*, vol. ii. p. 86, Old Series.



dole out the pensions of the State, to the ministers of endowed churches. Mr. Houston's worst traducers, however, have it not in their power to allege, that, in any thing he has said or done, he has betrayed any inclination after favours, from any of these quarters.

The reference to a note in the "*Christian Magistrate*," (p. 46.) which Dr. Paul and his friends have made the theme of ample declamation, is just managed in the same *candid* way as are other extracts in the *Declinature*. Dr. Paul represents Mr. Houston as teaching that the *one tenth* of the products of industry should be given as a national support of religion; and as also maintaining that this should go into the pockets of the clergy;\* and then he declaims most manfully against such an exorbitant assessment, and raises the loudest outcry against Mr. Houston's monstrous oppressive tithe system. It may suffice to say, at present, that both these allegations are entirely unfounded; and the most superficial glance at the note in question, will convince any impartial reader that the writers of the *Declinature* have done barefaced and signal injustice to the *Christian Magistrate* in this instance. After offering some reasons against the present tithe system of these countries, and alleging that it is unjust that the whole burden should be laid on the land-holder, it is added,—“At the same time, we would not be understood as objecting against the principle of a *public national support* being supplied to the ministers of religion, and for the maintenance of religious ordinances; nor, as even insinuating that a *tenth part* of the products of industry is too large a share to be devoted to the purposes of religion. Such a support,—that is,—‘*a public national support*;’ we are entirely persuaded from Scripture and reason, the rulers of a Christian land are bound to furnish;—all the objections that can be brought against it, have equal force against a provision made for *National Education*, or indeed against any tax levied for preserving the morals, and protecting the lives and properties of the subjects.” Where now is the application of all Dr. Paul's specious, swollen declamation about Mr. Houston's tithe system? The simple fact is, that instead of the author of the “*Christian Magistrate*” having a monstrous tithe system, as numbers have ridiculously and shamefully alleged, he has no tithe system at all. He merely pleads for a national support to true religion, on “equitable principles,” and, when referring to the liberality which should characterise Christians in promoting religion, he hints that it ought to be on a more extensive scale than we at present behold it. That the author, in the part of the sentence, in which the “*one tenth*” is mentioned, chiefly refers to private voluntary benevolence, is evident, when he mentions the *devoting* of the products of industry to religious purposes. Rulers supply, or furnish a state-support,—Christians in their private capacity *devote*, in the spirit of faith and prayer, of their worldly substance to build up the tabernacle. There is room for both means of support, and we maintain the value and importance both of an endowment from

\* See Dr. Paul's “Review of the *Christian Magistrate*,” pp. 15—20. Speech at Synod of 1838, in “Report,” &c.

scripturally qualified civil rulers, ministered on scriptural principles, and of the offerings of private voluntary benevolence for the evangelization of the nations. To guard against misapprehension, Mr. Houston simply says, in this place, that he would not be understood as "insinuating that the tenth part of the products of industry is too large a share to be devoted to the purposes of religion." Even when referring to private benevolence, he, in fact, says nothing positively on the subject of the portion to be allotted, though Dr. Paul being interpreter, the reader of the *Declinature* would think that he had asserted, in the most direct and unequivocal terms, that the State should exact the tenth part of the products of industry. Besides, the author of the "Christian Magistrate," in this place, expressly mentions "*the purposes of religion.*" Under these may be properly included, the building and support of school-houses, churches, colleges,—Bible and missionary enterprises,—the support of the poor, &c.\* Yet Dr. Paul, with a disingenuity in controversy, to which he may advance peculiar claims, represents Mr. Houston as wishing to draw all the state-support into the coffers of a greedy and avaricious clergy! The last passage quoted from the *Covenanter* on this head, about "private contributions," was given in the periodical as an extract from a synodical sermon, preached by a minister, then the Moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Scotland. This gentleman, Dr. Paul had, on another occasion, bespattered with his praises, when misapplying his sentiments, he tried to excite odium against the *Covenanter*. The extract given in the *Declinature* needs no comment. It is presumed the Doctors of the Eastern Presbytery themselves would not refuse "private contributions, to the utmost extent to which they can be procured," either for themselves or their congregations; and they have given proof sufficient that they are not over scrupulous of the quarter, from which such contributions come, provided *they* are to be the recipients.

11. Again, Mr. Houston and the "*Christian Magistrate*" (sec. 13, *Declinature*), are charged with teaching "the long-exploded error," that "dominion is founded in grace." Were Dr. Paul and his brethren to state distinctly what they mean by dominion being founded in grace, the readers of the *Declinature*, who will take the trouble of referring to the "*Christian Magistrate*,"† would

\* It is justly observed by Hetherington, in his "History of the Church of Scotland,"—Part I, lately published,—"While our Scottish Reformers still wished ecclesiastical revenues to be devoted to *ecclesiastical*, and not *civil* purposes, they did so, not for the sake of their own aggrandisement, but purely for the public good, purposing a threefold division and application of them,—one-third for the support of colleges and schools, one-third for the support of the poor, and the remaining third for the support of the ministers of religion."—Hist. Ch. of Scot. p. 81. Will it be said, after this, that the Reformers—for it is in reality to them that Dr. Paul refers when he discovers his virulence against a passage from the Second Book of Discipline,—"*must be regarded as the most greedy and avaricious clergy on the face of the earth?*"

† Dr. Paul and his allies are continually declaiming against the Editors of the *Covenanter*, and other members of Synod, for not allowing the people with whom they have influence to read the Doctor's pamphlets, newspaper philippics, &c.,—and they do not fail to cry out bigotry and intolerance against them on this ground. We might retort the charge, and ask, how many of those who have swallowed implicitly Dr. Paul's unsupported assertions and foul calumnies, have



at once perceive the utter groundlessness and falsity of the charge. Even were it true that Mr. Houston has taught, in the passages referred to, that *sainthood* is essential to the character of a Christian magistrate, this would not properly be teaching that magistracy is founded in grace. The error here charged against the author of the discourse is, that civil rule has its origin in the mediatorial system,—that it flows from Christ, as Head of the church, and is subordinate to the ministry of the Gospel. Hence the usurpations of the Romish Antichrist. Pretending to be Christ's vicar on earth, he claims to be king of kings, and strenuously maintains the subjection of the throne to the mitre. This degrading doctrine, the witnesses of the Reformation have always repudiated, as leading to the most intolerable tyranny and oppression by the ministers of religion, and the most enslaving bondage of civil rulers. Were the allegation of the Eastern calumniators true, that Mr. Houston has taught this odious doctrine, it would indeed constitute a very heavy charge,—it would amount to an abandonment of one great article of the Protestant Reformation. The slightest inspection of the matter, however, will convince any unprejudiced person, that the charge is not only unproved, but that there is abundant proof in direct opposition to it. The author of the "Christian Magistrate" has never, in the slightest instance, taught that civil rule is founded in grace. On the other hand, he has distinctly and explicitly taught, that "civil magistracy is instituted by God, as the moral Governor of the universe," based on the "law of nature, or the moral law," and "placed in subjection to Messiah, as Mediator;"\* and all care is taken, throughout the discourse, to shew that civil government is a divine ordinance, entirely distinct from ecclesiastical government, though placed under the Mediator, for the advancement of the divine glory. After the statement of these principles, which are assumed as fundamental, it surely cannot be alleged, with any justice, that Mr. Houston has taught that dominion is founded in grace.

In the discourse, it is expressly said, "Christian magistracy is the topic under consideration," p. 15,—and again, "It is the duty of a *Christian magistrate*, possessed of due Scriptural qualifications, and ruling over a *reformed nation*, that we have attempted to exhibit throughout the discourse,"—note, p. 60. Yet the Eastern Presbytery, fairly following Dr. Paul's mode of reasoning, by leaving out of view every statement that was calculated to place Mr. Houston's sentiments in a just light, and to lessen the weight

ever compared the passages in the "*Covenanter*," "*Christian Magistrate*," and "*Reviewer Reviewed*," which he has distorted and mangled, with the garbled extracts in the *Declinature*? But there are others who believe on trust,—other bigots besides those who plead for scriptural standards,—and the New-Lights and Liberals of the present day furnish a full complement of them. The truth is, however, honest Covenanters, and many other pious individuals, have had so many samples of Dr. Paul's opposition to reformation principles, and of his vindictive spirit, that they have no relish for his new wine of innovation. The remark made by an excellent elder of the church, in Synod, expresses much.—"How little of all that Dr. Paul has written could a pious man read on the Lord's day"!

\* See "Christian Magistrate," pp. 8, 10, &c.

of their foul charges, take no notice of these statements, and apply what is said exclusively about Christian magistracy, to magistrates in a heathen and unreformed land. In all the passages of the *Christian Magistrate*, which are quoted in this part of the *Declinature*, the author is merely speaking of the proper *qualifications* of Christian magistracy; and even granting that he had estimated these high, what had this to do with the *foundation* of magistracy? Civil government had been explicitly declared in the discourse to be founded in the law of nature, or moral law, and not in the law of grace; and common justice and candour would have required that Mr. Houston should have had the benefit of the statement. But justice and candour have little to do with the proceedings of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, towards Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod. When the author of the *Christian Magistrate* spoke of *piety*, as an essential qualification of Christian magistrates, in a reformed nation, he plainly meant *visible piety*, and he merely followed the method of statement and illustration of the most approved writers, who insist upon this qualification, without deeming it requisite always to repeat the distinction between religion in the heart and its outward evidences.\* The reference to the expression in the Westminster Confession, "Infidelity or difference of religion does not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, &c.," in the connexion in which it stands, evidently shews that the Eastern Presbytery have entirely different views of the subject, from what our Reformers and the Covenanting Church have ever maintained. The truly illustrious Renwick, in the *Sanquhar Declaration*, understood this sentiment in the Confession as referring only to a nation emerging out of Pagan darkness, or partially reformed; and so does the Act and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.† When the Eastern

\* See Dwight on the Qualifications of Civil Rulers.—Theology, vol. iv. pp. 118, 119.

\* On one expression (Christ. Mag. p. 24.) Dr. Paul harps incessantly, proving, as he thinks, that Mr. Houston must intend what he has advanced about *Qualifications*, (for this was the point under consideration,) to apply to Heathen Civil Rulers, as well as to Christian. The expression,—“If this be the case generally,” &c., may not be the most happy: but the very passage from which it is taken, and the whole strain of the discourse shows, that the author was speaking of different communities as wholly or partially reformed, and of different kinds of governors, and that he had no reference whatever to the character or qualifications of magistrates in a heathen nation. Dr. Paul and his worthy co-presbyters must have been perfectly aware of this,—yet how disingenuous their conduct in perverting the statements, and deluding those who implicitly follow them, by conveying the worst impressions respecting the doctrine taught in the “*Christian Magistrate*.”

† “We acknowledge it to be true, indeed, that infidels, and those of a different religion, are not (chiefly because such) presently to be declared no magistrates; for *magistratus non est magistratus quia Christianus, sed quia homo*. So that the magistratical power, considered *generaliter*, given for the good of human society, may be in the person of an infidel, or one of a different religion; but considered *specialiter*, given for the good of the church, it is only in the person of a professor of the true religion. Hence, in travelling or trafficking in foreign lands, be the persons in whom the power is, infidels or of a different religion, we cannot refuse subjection to their laws, so far as they are consistent with the written word of God, and our true Christian liberty. Howbeit our Covenants and Acts of Parliament have put a bar upon the admission of any, either infidels or of a different religion, while such, to govern in Scotland.”—*Sanquhar Declaration*.—Act and Testimony, p. 174.



Presbytery bring forward the expression, to set aside the necessity of piety in magistrates in a reformed nation, they pervert the Confession, and surrender a cardinal principle of the Covenanted Testimony.

The concluding allegation in this section, that Mr. Houston's views of magistracy are anti-government, and would go to banish all civil government from the earth, is akin to the objections which enemies of a Covenanted testimony have always advanced against those who have faithfully maintained it. It is needless to observe how frequently Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery employ the weapons of the worst enemies of the church, against the *Covenanter* and the *Christian Magistrate*, affording thus a strong presumptive argument, that these publications advocate the church's testimony, while the Eastern Presbytery make common cause with its known and determined adversaries. The command (1 Cor. x. 31),—"Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,"\* is obligatory on magistrates in their official capacity, as well as on individuals. The "*Christian Magistrate*" only maintains, in the passage quoted, that civil rulers lie under such an obligation binding them in all their acts, and that the divine glory ought to be the principal end of all their administration. The Eastern Presbytery's gloss is not borne out by the passage which they have quoted. The charge of being anti-government in principle, only identifies Mr. Houston with the faithful advocates of the Covenanted Reformation in different periods,—men of whom the world was not worthy,—while it exhibits those who have preferred it, as one in spirit and principle with those who said, in Zion's day of affliction,—“Raze, raze it to the foundation.”

12. The next charge (*Declinature*, sec. 14,) of Mr. Houston resting “the truth of our Standards on the character of the men who composed them, instead of resting it on the firm basis of divine revelation,” the Eastern Presbytery are perfectly aware is destitute of proper foundation. The distinguished writer of the article referred to in the *Covenanter*, of which, as usual, a detached sentence is quoted, does indeed adopt the method of *presumptive* argument, as one that is seldom resorted to on this question, but not to the exclusion of the scriptural character of the Standards. In a subsequent part of the very same paper, (*Covenanter*, vol. ii. p. 329, O.S.) this point is ably illustrated; and Dr. Paul knows perfectly, that in repeated passages of Mr. Houston's pamphlets, which he has so kindly reviewed, the scriptural character of the Standards is prominently exhibited. To hint, however, that this had been any where done, would not have suited the object of the writers of the *Declinature*. The Eastern Presbytery would rather keep back the truth, and peril whatever reputation they possess on a false charge, than lose the gratification of defaming the Editor of the *Covenanter*, and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod.

The charge against Mr. Houston, of applying, what Dr. Paul quite classically styles the “*Index Expurgatorious*,” to Rutherford's writings, is too contemptible for any serious notice. Dr. Paul would

\* As Dr. Paul is fond of drawing extreme conclusions from statements about duties, we should like to have his exposition of this command, as applied to civil rulers.

have desired nothing more, than that Mr. Houston had quoted the whole passage from Rutherford, and used the words, "even to blood and death;" and then, as in his charges against the *Covenanter* for teaching Erastianism, how loudly would he have declaimed about the demonstration which was thus furnished, that the author of the "Christian Magistrate" had taught the doctrine of capital punishments, and that his sentiments tended to deluge the world in blood! With what ecstatic delight would he have exhibited the godly Rutherford,—as he has indeed lately done, in his newspaper pasquils,—as *candidly* avowing the most hateful persecuting principles! What a pity, that Dr. Paul was not indulged the opportunity of telling the world, in his own sweet style, that Mr. Houston had taught, in express terms, that "heretics and idolaters should be punished, 'even to blood and to death.'" What a pity that the Doctor was prevented from flourishing, in this instance, about the "Inquisition,"—"the Sicilian tyrants,"—"oceans of human blood"! &c. &c. But surely there was no reason to expect that Mr. Houston would give such an advantage to such an opponent. The "Christian Magistrate" quoted Rutherford, in support of the principle of magistratical coercion. It was unnecessary to adduce testimony in relation to the *mode* of restraint and punishment, as in the discourse it was expressly said, the author would teach nothing on the subject, for this simple reason, that the Standards of the church fully declare the principle, but are silent as to the mode of its application. There is no injustice done to the excellent Rutherford by the omission,—nor is there any "pious fraud" attempted. Dr. Paul's course, however, is worse than "*pious fraud*,"—it is *impious* perversion of the Standards of the church, and of the Scriptures themselves,—it is the wholesale aspersing of the venerable Reformers, and all the while practising the delusion upon simple people that he is still a firm *Covenanter*. Mr. Houston has always vindicated the honoured names and writings of the Reformers and Martyrs of Scotland. To Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery in this controversy belongs the exclusive infamy of perverting their writings, aspersing their principles, and reproaching their memories.

13. The two remaining charges of the *Declinature* might be suffered to stand or fall, on the evidence by which the Eastern calumniators sustain them. The virulence which they breathe against an innocent victim is their best refutation. Mr. Houston, forsooth! does every thing in his power to subvert the whole fabric of the Protestant religion, by endeavouring to tear away "the pillars on which it rests." What, gentle reader, think you, are these pillars? According to the Eastern Separatists, not the supreme authority of God's word,—not what Luther well calls, *the great article of a standing or falling church*,—the doctrine of justification by faith, through the Saviour's righteousness imputed,—but "the right of private judgment and free inquiry"!! So much for the superior enlightenment of the Eastern Sages! So much for the liberality of the Nineteenth century! Against the "right of private judgment," when defined and regulated by the Divine law, and against "free inquiry," when directed by the revelation of heaven, and conducted in a prayerful humble spirit, Mr.



Houston has never written or uttered a single sentence. But he has refused to acknowledge a pretended right, in opposition to the authority of God, speaking in his word:—he has strongly condemned covenant-breaking, as displeasing to God and injurious to man,—and he has never praised that free inquiry, or free discussion, which aims to unsettle the minds of simple believers in the truths of the Bible, and to call in question, and then to reject important parts of the testimony of Jesus.

In the first quotation in support of the 15th charge, we have a specimen of Dr. Paul's characteristic blundering, in stating a simple fact, and of the "implicit faith," with which the other subscribers of the *Declinature* adopt his blunders, as well as his errors. It is said in the *Declinature*, p. 16,—“In his (Mr. Houston's) *Christian Magistrate*, p. 271, he writes thus.”—Now there are not 171, much less 271 pages in the *Christian Magistrate*, nor is there any such statement in all that work. Surely from learned Doctors, and from an Ecclesiastical Judicatory, ever boasting of superior illumination, a little more accuracy might have been expected in such an important document as a *Declinature*. In the sentence quoted, which is from the *Covenanter*, not the *Christian Magistrate*, a sentiment which was expressly mentioned as a *particular* case, is taken in a universal sense; and by this easy process of distortion, Dr. Paul and his willing coadjutors find Mr. Houston chargeable with “downright Popery”! The plea for breaking scriptural vows, deliberately made, and for avowing opinions contradictory to the church's profession, by persons still claiming to be in the church, and to hold her creed, is just what might have been expected from the Eastern Presbytery, after their proceedings for a number of years. But to reject such a plea, and to hold the binding obligation of the vows of the church,—for of this alone the *Covenanter* was speaking in the passages referred to,—might surely have merited some gentler name than “downright Popery”!! Let the Eastern calumniators, however, enjoy the full honour of applying such a term to Mr. Houston and the Reformed Synod. The vocabulary of abuse with which they have long been familiar, suggested it to them; and why should they not discover the kindness of their hearts, by applying it upon every convenient occasion? Such weapons, however, injure those that employ them, not those against whom they are pointed.

14. Last of all, as a fit conclusion of this fearful bill of indictment, against Mr. Houston, comes the charge, in which it is averred that “the Autocrat of Russia, the Grand Seignior, or the greatest despot that ever breathed, would be gentle as a lamb compared with Mr. Houston's '*Christian Magistrate*'”!!!! (*Declinature*, p. 17.) The sentiment on which this allegation rests, is taken from the writings of the excellent *James Durham*, one of the most eminent of Scotland's covenanted sons, and is frequently to be met with in the writings of other distinguished reformers. So then, according to the Eastern Separatists, Durham and his illustrious compeers, have taught doctrines respecting civil government, which would lead to the worst despotism and oppression; and to use their own tasteful climax, “the *Autocrat of Russia, the Grand Seignior, or the greatest despot that ever*

*breathed, would be gentle as a lamb, compared with*" the Christian magistrate which the reformers and martyrs of Scotland aimed to set up!! Such are the sentiments of the Eastern Presbytery, in relation to men and writings that were distinguished by a large measure of the unction of the Spirit, and whose names will be held in everlasting remembrance.

Any vindication of Durham's sentiments from us is not required. It is enough to say, that the obvious design of the reasoning was to shew that the Christian civil ruler, being figuratively the father of his people, ought to act in the spirit of a Christian parent, by caring for the spiritual welfare of his subjects, and by repressing whatever is detrimental to their best interests. It was never pretended that the similarity extends to every minute detail of government or management. The illustrations of the Separatists, about a father correcting a child for "spilling its milk," "soiling its clothes," not "using its pocket-handkerchief," and about "dismissing his servant for the smallest fault, or without any fault at all," are at once a specimen of Dr. Paul's vulgar sarcasm, and of the fallacy of the principles which he frequently takes for granted. The images of a father "correcting a child for spilling its milk," "not using its pocket-handkerchief," &c., are certainly homely, if not ludicrous, for a Presbyterian Declinature. And it is more than questionable whether a Christian parent, employing the rod of correction as a divine ordinance, may apply punishment in such trivial cases, or whether the Christian head of a family may dismiss a servant for the smallest fault, or without any fault at all,—the dismissal being regarded as a punishment, as the case under consideration necessarily requires. If Dr. Paul entertains such low and mistaken views of parental obligation and duty, it is not to be wondered at that he should be often erroneous, in reference to the exercise of magisterial authority.

15. In the conclusion of the *Declinature*, we have the reasons why the Eastern faction decline the Synod's authority, and separate from its fellowship and jurisdiction. By far the largest portion of the paper is taken up with Mr. Houston and his writings, and they being found guilty of almost every thing that is odious and revolting, it is as little as could be expected that the charges advanced, should be somehow or other fastened on the Reformed Synod, that there might, at least, be some plausible pretext furnished for Dr. Paul and his friends casting off all regard to a court, to which they had solemnly vowed subjection in the Lord,—some pretence afforded for setting off to establish a church on the ruins of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. A brief notice of the *reasons* offered for this important step may at present suffice:—

Reason 1st. Because the Synod have identified themselves with the errors which Dr. Paul has pretended to discover in Mr. Houston's writings, by "refusing to condemn them."

Answer 1. The Synod have never refused to condemn any error, when it was known or proved to be such.

2. What Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters allege to be errors in Mr. Houston's writings, are either truths plainly taught in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or in the ap-



proved writings of our eminent reforming forefathers, or absurd consequences which, Dr. Paul pretends, flow from these writings; and for the Synod to condemn these truths, would be to condemn important parts of the testimony, which they are solemnly pledged to maintain, and the men and writings which they have been always accustomed to hold in deserved veneration. The consequences which Dr. Paul strives, with all his might and main, to extort from Mr. Houston's published sentiments, are forced and illogical, flowing only from his own false and malignant constructions, and are utterly disclaimed by the Editors of the *Covenanter*.

3. The Synod is in nowise responsible for Mr. Houston's publications, nor has it ever identified itself with them, farther than as they exhibit and defend the principles which all sound Covenanters maintain.

4. All the proof of error in these publications, which the Eastern Separatists offer, is the mere assertion of Dr. Paul, which he would convert into argument and demonstration by frequent reiteration,—by deducing consequences which Mr. Houston and the Synod indignantly disavow,—by obtruding his own lax views of magistracy and covenant obligation, and by taking these for granted, although they are manifestly opposed to the views which the Reformed Church has all along maintained.

- Reason II. Refers to alleged untruths, falsehoods, and calumnies, with which the subscribers of the *Declinature* say they have been loaded, and their characters aspersed, and which they aver the Synod refused to condemn or examine.

Answer 1. The proof of these untruths and calumnies is the simple *ipse dixit* of Dr. Paul; and when, at different meetings of Synod, he was allowed every opportunity of venting all his spleen against the Editors of the *Covenanter*, he produced nothing but his own assertions, to disprove a single statement in the *Covenanter*, and other writings of Mr. Houston. It is easy to raise the outcry of falsehood and calumny against an opponent, and Dr. Paul has just taken the course, which enemies of truth have always adopted to get rid of a faithful testimony.

2. The Synod never refused to examine even the groundless allegations of Dr. Paul against Mr. Houston, but they would not trample upon their own acts, and precipitate the church into the vortex of interminable strife and confusion, to gratify his desire for revenge upon the Editors of the *Covenanter*, and his irreconcilable enmity to valuable parts of the Church's testimony.

3. Dr. Paul's papers are veritably *libels* against the Editors of the *Covenanter*. The 150 alleged *untruths* are statements or principles brought forward on good evidence; many of them have already been proved, and all of them can be fully established. The Eastern Presbytery, by adopting Dr. Paul's method of making their own assertion pass for proof, and condemning unheard, hope to ruin the character of the opponents of new-light doctrines. But neither the church nor the religious public will be influenced by such virulent and barefaced attempts. The characters of the Editors of the *Covenanter* stand as irreproachable, as they did before such dishonourable attacks were made upon them; and they are even

more endeared to those, who have learned to go forth to Jesus, without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Reason III. Charges the Synod with refusing to entertain the complaints preferred in memorials from congregations and sessions of the Separatists.

Answer 1. The Synod have been doing little else, from year to year, for the last six or seven years, than hearing Dr. Paul and his friends reproaching the testimony of the Church and the Synod itself, and uttering complaints, because the church would not countenance them in their latitudinarian and divisive courses. The Synod erred on the side of lenity, and forbearance towards those who were trampling on all order; and they have their thanks in the false and groundless allegations of the innovators.

2. Many of the memorials referred to, especially those from Dr. Paul and his congregation and session, were expressed in terms so disrespectful to the Synod, and they so openly proclaimed the insubordination of those who composed and presented them, that no court having a proper regard to its own honour would permit them even to lie on its table.

3. The Synod's Act in requiring papers to be held *in retentis*, till the Scottish Testimony should be adjudicated upon, was passed, we have seen, with the consent and approval of members of the Eastern Presbytery. It bore upon papers from other parties besides Dr. Paul and his friends, since there were memorials from many congregations and sessions under the care of Synod, complaining of the opposition carried on by Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters against the church's testimony, and the injury that they were doing to the church,—requiring that the innovators should be brought to censure on charges exhibited,—desiring the Synod's sanction to the *Declaration*, in overture, of which the memorialists cordially approved, &c. These applicants had as good reason to complain of delay as Dr. Paul and his friends, from whom had arisen, of late years, all the reproach on the testimony and ministers of the church. Had the Eastern Separatists been as much concerned about the peace and welfare of Zion as they were about their own honour, or the gratification of malice, they would have readily acquiesced in the law of Synod to which they refer, and their *Declinature* would not yet have seen the light.

4. The allusion to a lengthened delay, and to the Eastern Presbytery standing on "the pillory," can only be taken to be an indirect, but easily understood, blow at the discipline and order of the church; and another of those countless aspersions which the Synod has endured, at the hands of these disorderly and factious brethren. Dr. Paul and his party may see no difficulty in laying aside a portion of the church's testimony, and adopting another, without due deliberation; but this is a course which has hitherto been unknown to ecclesiastical judicatories, that were desirous of walking by former valuable attainments. There is not the least ground for the surmise about delay in adjudicating on the Scottish Testimony, since all the members of Synod uniformly discovered deep concern to have this matter speedily settled.

Reason IV. The fourth and last reason strikes against the Synod's resolutions in 1833, with which the Eastern Presbytery ex-



pressed themselves satisfied, but which, as we have seen, they all along set at naught. It is opposed to the resolution, which prohibited one minister in the church to write against another, and which referred to the discipline of the church to settle disputes among brethren. The "vindication of truth," they say, "compels" them to unfurl the standard of rebellion. What may be their ideas of truth, we pretend not fully to know; but it is certain that, in following Dr. Paul, the Eastern Presbytery have bitterly assailed various valuable truths of the church's testimony; and we have shewn that, on more than one occasion, they readily joined hands with parties who have discovered unappeasable hostility to all the distinctive articles of that testimony. Where, in any of their writings, have Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery put forward and vindicated a single peculiar principle of the Scottish Reformation? We know where they have virulently attacked and reproached several of them;—but we have yet to be informed where they have exhibited and vindicated any of them. The "defence of their own character," we can readily believe to be so important in the estimation of Dr. Paul and his friends, as to impel them to effect their design of rending the church. They have, for a length of time, manifested much more concern about their own honour and interest, than about the testimony, peace, or purity of the church. *Their* characters were never assailed, save as far as they regard the statement of the truth, and opposition to their new-light innovation, as assailing them; and surely they might have entrusted their vindication to the scriptural discipline of the house of God, and the piety and discernment of the church. The step they have taken, and their proceedings before and since they declined the Synod's authority, will not tend, in future years, to exhibit their characters in the most attractive light, and their names will not be cherished in the remembrance of those who love the peace and prosperity of Zion.

"Division in our church," they say, "we regard as most lamentable. We greatly deplore it. We have done every thing in our power to prevent it, but we cannot avoid it. It is forced on us." The reader who has carefully perused the preceding part of this narrative, will know how to appreciate these assertions. The whole conduct of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, for the last seven years, flatly contradicts them. From the beginning of the controversy, relative to the magistrate's power, till they withdrew from Synod, their measures and spirit were plainly divisive. No union would satisfy them, but that which was founded on the sacrifice of Covenanted principle, on a domineering ascendancy for themselves, and on the destruction of the reputation of those members of Synod, who presumed to differ from them. We can believe that they "greatly deplore" that they did not succeed in their designs. Union, on the footing of truth and love, they rejected and scorned. Division they fervently sought, when they failed in their object of moving the church from her ancient foundation.

In "renouncing your jurisdiction," they say, "we do not renounce our principles." This may be all true. They may have been, and some of them probably were inoculated with new light

views, years before the controversy commenced. They may have been traitors in the camp, keeping close alliance with enemies, and ready at every moment to sell the standard and betray the citadel. But the verdict pronounced, both within and without the church, and even by some of Dr. Paul's admirers, is, that he and the Eastern Presbytery have renounced the church's principles,—and have emancipated themselves from the trammels by which they were formerly held. Like other backsliders, they would wear the mask; and retain the name of Reformed Presbyterians, while in principle they have abandoned the footsteps of the flock. They challenge those whom they style "*Calumniators*," to point out a single principle of the Church's Testimony which they have relinquished. As we suppose the kindly epithet is intended for us, we might allege that the challenge has been repeatedly met,\* and the church, both in this country, and in Scotland, and America, has been satisfied with the exposure. Nevertheless, we shall, in the close of this pamphlet, respond to the call, and briefly contrast truths taught in the Standards and approved writings of the church with the sentiments which have been avowed by Dr. Paul and his followers. We shall then ask our readers to "look on this picture and on that," and conclude how far the Eastern Separatists are still entitled to the designation of Reformed Presbyterians.

In nearly the very next sentence, they themselves accept the challenge, and convict themselves of the abandonment of Covenanting principle. They say,—“With those Covenanters who think that the civil magistrate should punish heretics and idolaters, we would have borne for some time, but they would not bear with us.” Now here they plainly declare they are not the Covenanters who hold that the civil magistrate should punish gross heretics and idolaters, and yet this sentiment has been always held by all Covenanters, from the first swearing of the British Covenants, till the days of Dr. Paul. It is declared in the Westminster Confession,—embodied in the Covenants,—taught in the writings of the most eminent advocates of the Covenanted Reformation,—and explicitly declared in *Three Testimonies* of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Act, Declaration and Testimony, the American, and the New Scottish Testimony. Now, what does the declaration which we have just quoted from the *Declination* of the Eastern Presbytery amount to? Why, that Dr. Paul and his followers have entirely given up a principle of the Church's Testimony, which is inseparably connected with other valuable truths,—a principle which Covenanted witnesses have always held, and which the three Synods in Ireland, Scotland, and America, now hold. The Separatists, forsooth, are willing to live in the church and eat her bread, if they are allowed to utter the foulest invectives against this principle, and to asperse the Reformers and present witnesses for maintaining it. The Synod,

\* See "Christian Magistrate," in the authorities mentioned from p. 65 to p. 84, and in the notes, which are adduced from the Confessions and Testimonies of the Reformed Churches, and the writers of eminent witnesses for truth, in relation to the magistrate's coercive power, and "Reviewer Reviewed," from p. 81 to p. 94.



it is true, were unwilling to permit these invectives to be poured forth from year to year,—but they all along erred on the side of gentleness and forbearance. They instituted no process against the assailants of the testimony, and the vilifiers of their fathers' memory. Dr. Paul and his faction could not bear that the Synod should go forward displaying the standard for truth, which they had received from their fathers, and which was transmitted to them by costly sacrifices. And, disguise it as the *Declining* gentlemen may, they forsook the Synod, and originated schism, just because they could not bring the Synod to tolerate innovation,—adopt their new-light doctrines,—and join with infidels and others in pouring torrents of reproach upon the venerable reformers.

The allegation about “virtual excommunication,” which Dr. Paul is so fond of making a theme of piteous complaint, is easily exposed. It refers, we believe, to some congregations in the church, that wished to walk in the good old way, refusing to hear him, after he had broached his new-light sentiments, maligned his brethren, aspersed the memories of the fathers of the church, and opened wide the flood-gates of reproach upon a Covenanted profession. This they did of their own accord, and in places where the ministers of the Eastern Presbytery might have been expected to possess much more influence than their opponents. Dr. Paul “excommunicated” himself, by his opposition to the Testimony of the church, and by his virulent assaults upon her ministers. In some places, his latitudinarian explanation of the Terms of Communion, and his political and Voluntary harangues, in addressing communicants at the Lord's table, had begun to excite disgust; but it was his new-light doctrines and his disorderly procedure, that chiefly induced the people to testify in this way their marked disapprobation. Surely this might have taught the other members of the Eastern Presbytery, who followed him, that he was leading them away from Covenanting ground, as it forcibly declared to himself, that the sense of the well-disposed and steadfast members of the church was against him. That the people should act thus, is not much to be wondered at. He had branded principles which they valued, with every designation that was odious and revolting; he had held them up to the gaze and scorn of the community, as sworn to extirpate Romanists and others, every time they sat down at the Lord's table;\* he had declared, that he and his co-presbyters considered themselves disgraced by connexion with those who held such intolerant and persecuting principles;† and he was publicly known to be on intimate terms, with those who had published the most injurious aspersions upon the church's standards, ministers, and members. After this, the people would have been passive indeed, if they had willingly

\* This he did in the discussion on the Auchinsnaugh Renovation, in the Synod, in 1837.

† Dr. Paul made this remark respecting the congregation of Baliesmill, then under the jurisdiction of his own Presbytery, at the meeting of Synod in 1838. A number of ministers and elders, at the time, declared they held the principles of the Baliesmill congregation, and that Dr. Paul's expression was an aspersion on the whole body.

received sealing ordinances at the hands of their reviler. They exercised rights, which any people, similarly treated, would have claimed; and the only wonder now is, that, exposed as they were to so much slander and odium, by Dr. Paul and his allies, they did not, in other ways than simply refusing to hear these ministers, testify their disapprobation. The "excommunication" of the Eastern Presbytery, we repeat it, was their own act and deed, by their abandoning and opposing truths which the church had all along held, and by their following the trade of perversion, and slander. Least of all have *they* reason to complain. On their own principles, the people surely had the right to exercise *liberty of conscience* and *private judgment*. If they disliked the *new wine* of liberality and *innovation*, and preferred the *old wine* of Covenanting principle and order, surely Dr. Paul would not *compel* them to drink what they regarded as a deleterious nostrum, or to accept as their physician, one whom they considered a self-opinionated and reckless empiric.

There is no need for vindicating the Synod from the charge of *acting disorderly*, advanced in the close of the *Declinature*,—nor for referring particularly to the "sorrowful hearts" of the Separatists in withdrawing,—nor to their "affectionate regards" and "prayers" \* for their "erring brethren,"—nor to their pity for the "error" and credulity of the Covenanting "laity,"—nor to their proposals to enlighten the church and the world, &c., &c. All this may pass current with Dr. Paul's admirers,—but to those who value the truth, and who have attentively observed the conduct of himself and his co-presbyters, for a number of years, it must pass for the mere "cant," if not of hypocrisy, at least of innovation and schism. The Separatists have given little indication indeed of *sorrow of heart*, for sowing division and confusion in the church; and they have never evinced the least reluctance to expose to odium, those who resisted their disorderly courses,—whether the Editors of the *Covenanter*, or the whole Synod. They may have grieved that they could not move the church from her profession, and that they could not succeed in establishing the reign of a spurious liberality; but as to any sorrow for dishonouring the church, wounding the godly, and slandering their brethren, of this we have no evidence whatever. And to say nothing farther, the *Declinature* itself, and the other pasquils which Dr. Paul and his friends have published in the newspapers, and circulated as widely as possible, since their separation, discover, plainly enough, the kind of "affectionate regards," which they entertain for the members of the Reformed Synod, and the spirit in which they would offer prayers in its behalf. This is not the first instance of men fasting and praying "*for*

\* The resolution of the gentlemen who signed the *Declinature*, to pray for "their erring brethren," is akin to Dr. Paul's declaration respecting the Editors of the *Covenanter*, made at the close of his venomous speech in the Synod of 1838; after having ascribed to them the most odious principles, and laboured with all his might to render them obnoxious to the whole community,—after characteristically jumbling together things solemn and sacred with light and ludicrous allusions, and appealing to the feelings or views of the worst parts of the audience, he said "he would pray for them!"



*strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness :*" and we may be free to say, that had these gentlemen discovered more of the spirit of love and of prayer, in the meetings of Synod and elsewhere, many of their proceedings had not been taken,—many of their scurrilous publications had never seen the light.

The Covenanting "laity" can well afford to dispense with the "pity" of those who have maligned the principles and the church which they love. They are intelligent enough to discern the character and tendency of Dr. Paul's sentiments,—they have already suffered something for a good conscience, and for the testimony of Jesus,—and he may rest assured that it is not all the odium and reproach that he and his co-presbyters can collect and heap upon them, that will frighten them from the standard of truth,—that will induce them to abandon their colours, or to launch into courses of liberalism and innovation. We tell him, no "efforts" are required to keep the people "in ignorance," and to "muffle them." Before he and his friends left the church, the members that had any regard to practical piety, and to unity and peace, were nauseated with his pamphlets, speeches, &c., in which the same shout of persecution, intolerance, blood, &c., was kept up incessantly, and the same stale arguments,—if arguments they could be called,—were repeated, times without number. And, now that the Doctor and his friends have betaken themselves to the outside of the house, the honest members of the church will have little hankering after the same cold dishes, served up to them, perhaps a tenth or twentieth time, by men who have thrown off the mask, and plainly declared themselves among the most virulent assailants of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. And if they, sometimes, read his paltry publications, that are obtruded upon them *by his flying stationers*, we have no fear of his gaining converts in this way. The effect will just be, what it has already been,—the simple-minded members of the church will only regard his writings with the greater disgust,—and they will cling the more closely to the principles which he would root out, and to those who are the objects of his rancorous hostility.

To form a proper estimate of the "affectionate regards" which the Eastern Presbytery entertain for their "erring brethren,"—the ministers of Synod, and of their respect for the "laity" of the church, we may only notice, in conclusion, the insinuations and charges which they throw out against them in the very passages,\* in which they pour forth the sorrows of their hearts, talk of their "hearts desire and prayer to God," and introduce their ejaculations and aspirations, for restored union and harmony. They speak of the ministers as "sanctimoniously talking of the blood of the martyrs,"—"publishing calumnies innumerable,"—"walking disorderly," &c. The laity they represent as "believing what their ministers told them,"—"seeing through a false medium,"—submitting to be "muffled,"—"condemning before they hear," &c. And of the Synod they speak as not correcting "errors and calumnies, as exercising or countenancing the partiality and the tyranny by which the peace and prosperity of the church have been des-

\* See last page of the *Declinature*.

troysed,"—and as manifesting, "instead of a spirit of conciliation and peace," a "spirit of factious division." Such is the charitable judgment to which Dr. Paul and his co-presbyters have given expression, respecting the Synod, and the ministers and people of the Reformed Presbyterian Church;—such the kindly terms in which they speak of former brethren; and this is the spirit in which they would have us believe,—gentle, good men!—they desire the restoration of union and peace, and in which they stand engaged to pray for their "erring brethren." And as they close the "*Protest and Declinature*," we conclude our strictures, with simply remarking, that it presents a pretty fair and full epitome of Dr. Paul's speeches, pamphlets, memorials, &c., in relation to the magistrate's power, that have been given to the Synod or the public, for the last eight or nine years: and that, as it was the first published paper of the Eastern Separatists, after their withdrawal from the Synod, it may be taken as a declaration of the grounds on which the new sect is constituted. From it, the Covenanting community and the religious public may judge of the principles and spirit of the men, who have obtained the unenviable honour of creating schism, and unfurling the standard of faction and rebellion.

#### SECTION X.

*Proceedings of the Separatists, after their withdrawal from the Reformed Presbyterian Church.—Their Newspaper Communications, and Pamphlets.—Correspondence between Dr. Paul and the Committee of Synod.—Communication of the Rev. Gordon T. Ewing.—Deceptive adoption of the New Scottish Testimony by the Eastern Separatists.—Dr. Paul's Newspaper Controversy with the Rev. John Stott.—Contrast of Dr. Paul's sentiments with the Standards of the Church.—Conclusion.*

The length to which our Narrative, and the Strictures on the *Declinature* have already extended, prevents us from noticing, otherwise than in the most cursory manner, the proceedings of the new sect, since they separated from the Reformed Synod, and the various publications which they have emitted, in accordance with their avowed design of "undeceiving" the church,—“explaining their principles,”—and “defending their characters.” We have already related the forbearing, conciliatory spirit which the Synod manifested, even after the Eastern Presbytery had tabled their *Declinature*, and withdrawn. Instead of proceeding to censure or suspension, for contumacy and rebellion,—not to mention error and irregularity, as the laws of Presbyterian Church Government would have warranted, they sent a deputation to urge them to return to their duty and their place in Synod,—and when this friendly measure failed, through the obstinacy of the Separatists, still the Supreme Judicatory refrained from taking any step, that even malice could construe into a design to expose the principles or injure the reputation of those who had divided the church. Whether the Synod should not have publicly marked their condemnation of the prin-



ciples and practices of the Separatists, and in self-defence and for the protection of the congregations entrusted to their care, inflicted censure upon those who had violated order, we wait not to inquire,—but sure we are, that the gentleness and forbearance shown towards them, left it entirely out of their power to allege that they were driven to the hostile measures to which they had recourse. The Synod bewailed the infatuation which led Dr. Paul and his friends to decline its authority, and separate from the church; they performed no act, on their retiring, that could be considered as erecting a barrier to their return to dutiful submission and friendly co-operation; and we have reason to believe that every member of Synod would have hailed their restoration to their places, on the ground of their acknowledging the church's testimony, and ceasing to introduce innovation and to embroil the church. The course adopted by the Separatists displayed a spirit the reverse of all this,—it was, in fact, an open declaration of war, and an avowal that no weapons would be spared that might serve to sink the Synod in public opinion, and to exterminate the Reformed Presbyterian Church. If their success has fallen short of their anticipations, we are not to ascribe it to their want of will, or their withholding of exertions,—but to the gracious care exercised over his church by Him, who makes even the wrath of man to praise him, and who restrains the remainder of man's wrath.

Very soon after the adjournment of Synod, the Eastern Presbytery published, in several of the Belfast Newspapers, the *Declination* which they had presented to Synod, and so anxious were they to begin the war, that they did not wait even to correct the palpable blunders and inconsistencies of the paper. It was then published in a pamphlet form,—and every means in their power was employed, to give it the most extensive circulation, in this country, and in Scotland, England, and America. Persons who were known to be hostile to a Covenanted profession,—individuals of loose character, were employed to circulate this document,—it was handed about in public-houses and markets, to members of the church,—it was sent gratis to persons in connexion with congregations under the care of Synod,—it was diligently dispersed among persons of other religious denominations, especially Romanists,—and was industriously used, on all fitting occasions, to excite prejudice against those ministers who had resisted Dr. Paul's new-light sentiments and disorderly procedure. In the same manner was published paper after paper, of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery,—such as “*Farther Account of the Proceedings of the Eastern Presbytery*,”—being the “*Libel*” of Dr. Paul to the Northern Presbytery, and his *Protest* against their decision.—“*The Eastern Presbytery to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Ireland*.”—“*An Exposure of Persecution, by the Rev. Dr. Paul*,”—&c., &c. With these bitter philippics, column after column of certain liberal newspapers\* was filled; and week after

\* The principal newspapers which kept their columns always open for these attacks of Dr. Paul upon the Reformed Synod and its members, were the *Belfast Newsletter*, and the *Northern Whig*, whose friendship to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, need not here be related.

week, they were obtruded on the public, and circulated, in a pamphlet form, in every direction where it was thought they would produce any effect in exciting prejudice against the Synod, or in helping the cause of the Separatists.

Now, we might ask any person of sense or candour, was this procedure calculated to generate a "spirit of conciliation and peace"? Did it tend to restore harmony, and to heal the breach that had been made? Truly he must have little acquaintance with human nature, or with the rights of either civil or ecclesiastical society, who would hazard an affirmative answer. The Eastern Separatists, on all convenient occasions, could talk of peace, and of their separation being but temporary;—they could trumpet their own liberality, in allowing *some* of their followers to hear ministers in connexion with the Synod; they could declaim against the illiberality of those who would not countenance their ministrations, after they had rebelled against the Synod and maligned its character; and, to their dupes, they could affect the aspect and language of grief, and utter doleful complaints of the hard treatment they were receiving!!

Even had the Separatists furnished no previous grounds for the alienation of the church's affections from them, the publication of the papers which we have noticed, was matter sufficient to produce this result. The worst enemies of the Covenanting Church had never advanced allegations more foul, nor imputations more odious, against the Reformed Synod, than did Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, in the *Declinature*, and other papers which they published since their separation. To talk as they do, in some of these papers, of future union and fellowship, with those whom they had thus aspersed and vilified, was worse than ridiculous. The *spirit* exhibited in all the papers emitted by Dr. Paul and his brethren, is the same that characterises the *Declinature* from beginning to end. It is that of relentless and insatiable malice, towards the *Editors* of the *Covenanter*, and of deep-rooted hostility to the principles and order of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod. Hence, the pamphlets and fly-sheets of the Eastern Presbytery have always been special favourites with the church's enemies; they are arrows prepared to their hand, which they can shoot at pleasure, under the cover of the names of men who would have us believe they are still faithful and true Covenanters. Our space, at present, will not allow us to enter into any consideration of the *principles* avowed in these papers; as far as these have not been already noticed, we purpose to bring them under review in the *Second Part* of this Narrative. We may merely give a sample or two of the *spirit* which pervades the pamphlets of the Separatists, towards the Reformed Synod. Passing over all they say about Messrs. Houston and Dick,—the constant mark of their envenomed arrows, the victims of their implacable hate,—they speak of the Synod as establishing "iniquity by a law,"—as bringing in a law with which "thieves, robbers, and murderers would be delighted," which would "unhinge civil society," and introduce, immediately, the "reign of anarchy." They insinuate that the Reformed Synod is one of those "*public bodies that have no conscience.*" They charge the Synod with "tyranny and injustice," and "with a system



of ill-treatment, practised for many years."\* And then they go on to pervert expressions of Scripture, and to appeal to "God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels." To all this railing, reply or vindication is unnecessary, and appeals of the kind we have just noticed, in the connexion and spirit in which they are introduced, border as nearly upon profanity as any thing we could mention. We only notice this tirade, to put it to the candid reader, whether it was in this style that men would write, who could declare that "no language can describe the anguish they endured," in their separation. If such statements are to be credited, the Separatists can only mean, that the Synod, having come to their bar, and pleaded guilty to the charges of tyranny, injustice, want of honesty and conscience, &c., and having renounced principles which they had solemnly vowed to maintain, and which the church had always held, would receive due censure; and then, on promise of dutiful submission, in all time future, to their sovereign masters, they would receive absolution. The Eastern gentlemen well enough know, that the Reformed Synod desires no such harmony and peace; and as their writings and conduct have erected impassable barriers to any other, common honesty would require them to cease deluding simple people with the talk about peace and reunion, while their every word and action tend entirely to prevent their attainment.

The most lengthened document that has been published by the Eastern Presbytery since their separation, and one to which Dr. Paul, at least, is in the habit of referring as most triumphant, is a paper which first appeared in the *Belfast News-letter*, and was entitled,—"*An Exposure of Persecution by the Eastern Presbytery*," or "*Remarks on the Persecuting Principles contained in 'THE DECLARATION,' read by the Rev. James Dick, in the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of 1837.*" This paper, which is stated to have been remarks of the Loughmourne Session, is that which was read before the Eastern Presbytery, received its sanction at a meeting in Ballymena in 1838, and was shortly afterwards laid on the Synod's table. It was designed to oppose the Synod's overture on Civil Government, usually called the "*Declaration.*" It is as plausible, and deceptive, as any paper that has issued from the same quarter, and may be considered as an exhibition of the sentiments of the Separatists, in opposition to the employment of civil authority in behalf of true religion. At present we notice it, not to discuss the sentiments which it puts forward, for our limits will not admit this, but to call attention to the mode of reasoning which its authors adopt. The "*Exposure of Persecution*" is properly a virulent, though studied and well-planned attack, upon the New Scottish Testimony, and so upon the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Scotland. *Of five or six statements* in the Overture, which are selected for animadversion by Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, *four* of them are *in the very words*, or in expressions equivalent to the words, of the New

\* See the Eastern Presbytery to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Ireland, in the *Belfast News-letter* of August, 1840.

Scottish Testimony, and these form the grand subjects of the exposure. The reader will be convinced of this by comparing pages 2, 5, 6 and 12, with the doctrinal part of the New Scottish Testimony, pages 163, 156, 157 and 158.\* So, then, according to the author of the *Exposure of Persecution*, not Messrs. Houston and Dick, not the Reformed Synod in Ireland, but the Reformed Synod in Scotland is chargeable with teaching persecution of the worst kind,—is guilty of putting forward dark, ambiguous statements, and fallacious reasonings,—and of what is much worse, of publishing principles that authorize “despotism,”—tend to introduce “everlasting contention, rapine, plunder, and bloodshed,”—and would “dissolve the frame of society,” and “depopulate the globe!!” The Scottish Reformed Synod needs not our defence or vindication. The sentiments which they have deliberately, and as far as we have ever been able to learn, unanimously published in their Testimony, were under judicial consideration for years. The fathers and brethren of that section of the Covenanting Church are well able to defend them, and Dr. Paul and his allies may rest assured, that it will require much more than the Doctor’s logic, and sophistry, and declamation, to lead good men of almost any religious persuasion, who know them, to believe that they maintain such bloody and abominable principles as are ascribed to them. It was not enough to assail the Reformers through the Editors of the *Covenanter*,—not enough to expose them, even in this paper,—the whole drift and bearing of it is to exhibit the Scottish Reformed Synod in the most odious and hateful light. After this, it is manifestly most absurd to claim that the Separatists are in unison with the views of the Scottish Reformed Synod, on the article of magistracy. None but those who make a trade of deception, or who are duped by persons more knowing and designing than themselves, would venture on such an assertion. The “*Exposure of Persecution*” will long hence subserve a purpose, which those who gave it to the world, in all likelihood, never intended. It will complete the chain of historical proof, that the New Sect are in diametrical opposition, not only to the Covenanted Standards, and Reformers, and Martyrs, on the subject of magistracy, but also to the Judicatories of the Reformed Church in Ireland, Scotland, and America; and that any who dare to plead for the doctrines of the Reformation on this article, however excellent their character, and distinguished their talents and station, may expect to be exposed to all the misrepresentation and reproach that it is in the power of Dr. Paul and his associates to heap on them.

The “*Exposure*” contains several samples of Dr. Paul’s favourite mode of reasoning,—substituting *persons*, where the Scottish Synod had spoken of *principles*, or rites of worship, and *punishment* for *restraint*,—omitting qualifying, or explanatory clauses,—and leaping at consequences wholly unwarranted by the premises. Thus, instead of Paganism, the “rites of Mahomet,” and the “idolatry of Antichrist,” he artfully inserts “heathens,”—“Ma-

\* The plea set up by the Eastern Separatists, in reference to this glaring opposition to the New Scottish Testimony, is, that the expressions in question are not in the body of the Testimony, but in the notes. We shall notice the futility of this plea afterwards.



hometans," and "Roman Catholics,"\* and then he proceeds to picture the destruction of "all civil and commercial intercourse," wholesale and universal massacre, as flowing from the sentiment of the Scottish Reformed Synod!! And again, Dr. Paul argues for *legal protection* in a reformed land, to those who publish the most hateful and dangerous errors, and to the worst kinds of idolatry and false worship. This is unquestionably a step in advance of the "simple forbearance," with which he set out, in his attacks upon the *Covenanter*; and we should like a disquisition from the Dr. about the difference between *authoritative protection* of idolatry and false worship, for which he pleads, and *authoritative toleration*, which he then refused. There are many other points in the "Exposure," from which it were easy to show the nature and tendency of the new-light doctrines; such as the statement, "no man is accountable in matters of religion to another man's conscience,"—the rights of errorists and idolaters, for which Dr. Paul pleads,—the punishment of idolaters, under the law,—the judgment from between the cherubims,—and the appeal now to the day of judgment, &c. &c.:—but we forbear to enter upon these topics at present. Notwithstanding the complacency, with which Dr. Paul regards the "Exposure of Persecution," and the marvellous effect which he ascribes to it, the principles taught in the *Scottish Testimony*, and in the Synod's overture, stand on an evidence and authority, which he cannot shake,—and will be valued by those, who love the testimony of Jesus, long after the ephemeral productions of the Eastern Separatists shall have sunk into oblivion.

Having thus briefly noticed the principal documents which were issued by the Eastern Presbytery, after their separation from Synod, and seen how little they were calculated to heal the breach, we turn to the public proceedings of the Separatists, where the evidence is greatly increased, that they aimed at the injury of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. At meetings of those, calling themselves the Eastern Presbytery, certain members of Synod were held up to odium,—papers that had been before Synod, containing slanderous charges, were read,—and encouragement was given to disaffected individuals, scattered throughout any of the congregations, in connexion with Synod. An active correspondence was kept up with such characters,—and by means of them the fly-sheets of the Separatists were pushed off; and division and strife were fomented in the most peaceful parts of the church. Preaching was granted in the bounds of congregations, under the jurisdiction of Synod, although in every case, with the exception of the late Mr. Gamble's congregation, the persons that had any previous connexion with the church, who countenanced the ministrations of the Eastern Separatists, were very few, and remarkable neither

\* This, it will be remembered, is what Dr. Paul has, without proper ground, charged upon Mr. Houston and the *Covenanter*, when he represents them as inculcating, that it is the extirpation of *persons*, and not of *principles*, that is intended in the Solemn League and Covenant. We have already exposed this misrepresentation in our remarks on the first charge of the *Declinature*.

for intelligence nor discretion.\* The congregation of the late Mr. Gamble, under the care of the Western Presbytery, applied to the Separatists for the dispensation of ordinances,—and all at once, the Eastern Presbytery, though distant more than 60 miles from them, received them,—appointed them supplies of preaching, and the dispensation of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They afterwards completed the work of disorder and schism in this congregation, by ordaining over a part of it, a young man,—a licentiate, who received appointments from the Synod, after Dr. Paul and others had given in their *Declination*, and having fulfilled some of them, relinquished the jurisdiction of the Western Presbytery, when prospects of a settlement under the standard of rebellion were presented. Did proceedings like these manifest any friendly feeling towards the Synod,—were they calculated to keep the door of accommodation open? On the contrary, they were thus trampling upon the good order which had hitherto prevailed in the Reformed Presbyterian Church,—they were treating the Synod and its subordinate judicatories with contempt,—they were holding out encouragement to faction,—and they plainly declared, that their design was, to divide, and subjugate to their imperious dictation, wherever, by violence or deception,† they could make an inroad upon any of the flocks under the care of the Synod. No unprejudiced person will pretend to say, that a course of conduct such as this, discovered any friendly feeling towards the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and none, we are confident, will allege that it opened a prospect of re-union and concord. It was however quite in keeping with the course which was pursued by Dr. Paul and his brethren of the Eastern Presbytery, for a long time before they withdrew,—sowing disorder, invading rights, and injuring, as much as they could, the feelings and character of members of Synod, and all the while declaring that they were not the aggressors, and that

\* Pursuing the method of keeping up delusion, which they had practised all along, the Separatists and their friends boasted not a little of the members that adhered to them, and that were opposed to the Synod. Thus it was told that a congregation at Myroe, near Newtownlimavady, had joined them, because some ministers of the Eastern Presbytery had been allowed to preach a few days in a Meeting-house built by unendowed Seceders and others,—this congregation has since given a call to a licentiate of the Burgher (Scotch) Seceding connexion. Forsooth, they had gained a great point at Boardmills, County Down, because Dr. Paul preached one Sabbath there! One small vacancy of the Eastern Presbytery, Cloghmills, unanimously agreed to receive ordinances from the Northern Presbytery, and nearly the one half of another vacant congregation under their care, Portglenone, also sought for ministrations from the Committee of Synod. To counterbalance these losses, and the departure of several members from three of their congregations, having pastors, the Eastern Presbytery could not boast of more than a very few individuals, from two or three congregations that adhered to the Synod; and we have not heard of any from other sections of the church, connecting themselves with them, notwithstanding all their shouting about toleration and liberality.

† In some cases, to induce persons adhering to the Synod to join them, the cry was, blood and death,—vast difference,—insurmountable breach, &c.; but in other cases, when members were to be retained by the Eastern Presbytery, who were well affected to the Synod, they were told that the difference was only about points of order,—that the separation was only temporary,—and that the Separatists were most anxious for reconciliation and re-union.



they were most desirous of cultivating peace and love. The character of these schismatical proceedings was sufficiently seen both by the ministers and members of the church,—and many of them hesitated not to declare that, had there been no other grounds of preventing the reception of Dr. Paul and his allies, without marked censure, their writings and conduct, after they cast off the authority of the Synod, furnished reasons of the most weighty kind.

It will be remembered, that we have already related the appointment of a Committee, at the close of the sessions of the last meeting of Synod, to correspond with the sister judicatory in Scotland, and to watch over the interests of the church till the next meeting of Synod. Some time after, the committee met, and resolved, on their own responsibility, to correspond with Dr. Paul. As the committee have not submitted their report, it would be premature to say any thing respecting the propriety or expediency of such a step; but we are ready to admit that it was taken, with the desire of promoting peace, and to bring about reunion. We have reason to believe that the overtures made by the committee to Dr. Paul were all of a pacific, healing nature,—nothing being said or written that was calculated to hurt feelings, open up old sores, or excite prejudice. If the fathers and brethren, who were concerned in this business, expected to pacify the ring-leader of faction, or to bring the Separatists to a sense of their duty, they were speedily undeceived. Dr. Paul rejected every proposal made by the committee, and in his communication to them had recourse to his usual themes of declamation, making the committee of no account, and in his own reckoning, at least, triumphing over them. The committee, in consequence, after three meetings, agreed to break off all correspondence with the Separatists,—having found, by experience, what, from the spirit which they had often before displayed, might have been anticipated, that there could be no agreement with them, but on the sacrifice of truths taught in the Standards of the church, and by allowing them to dictate to the Synod the measures which they should adopt. There was thus added another to the many proofs which have been already given, that Dr. Paul and his friends, whatever they pretended or said, sought no peace, but on a ground of which the history of ecclesiastical judicatories furnishes no example,—that of a faction, who had declined the authority of the Court, and reviled its principles, members, and proceedings, prescribing the terms of reconciliation!

It must not be omitted here, that one member of the Synod's committee,—the Rev. Gordon T. Ewing,—dissented from his brethren, in their resolution to break off correspondence with Dr. Paul. Not long after, this gentleman gave publicity to a paper, which, he informs us, he had prepared for the committee, but which they rejected. Of his previous newspaper epistles, or the present puny production, we deem it beneath us to take any particular notice. Its whole texture and spirit are in perfect keeping with its author's course of conduct, while a member of Synod,—always manifesting a ready disposition to bring in the *Covenanter* and its Editors faulty, but never insinuating that any thing in principle or procedure was wrong with the gentlemen

of the East. This, with ample professions of impartiality and disinterestedness, and earnest desires about peace often expressed, without saying ought in relation to the proper grounds of peace and concord, formed Mr. Ewing's public procedure in Synod; and these are the prominent characteristics of his pamphlet. The church has already formed its estimate of the value of Mr. Ewing's services; and as his pamphlet, suppressing leading facts, and blundering about the most familiar dates, can do us no harm, the Separatists who get it into their possession, are quite at liberty to make any use of it they think proper, to help the cause of misrepresentation and innovation.

It only remains that we allude to the latest publications of Dr. Paul, as discovering the same rancorous hostility to the principles and ministers of the Reformed Synod, as he has evinced from the commencement of the controversy. Soon after the publication of the *Exposure of Persecution*, by the Eastern Presbytery, and after Dr. Paul had treated with scorn the Synod's committee, and the correspondence between him and them had been broken off, the *Rev. John Stott*, a member of the committee, published a letter in the *Derry Standard*, in which he ably vindicated the Synod from several of the aspersions contained in the *Exposure*; shewed that the Eastern Presbytery were in reality assailing the Scottish Testimony more than the Synod's overture; exhibited the nature and tendency of their principles, and defended the doctrine of the Standards from their attacks. In this, and two subsequent letters published by Mr. Stott, in the same paper, in reply to communications from Dr. Paul, he discovered an extensive acquaintance with the subject, skill in controversy, and candour; and fully established his principal point, shewing that Dr. Paul and the other Separatists, had clearly abandoned doctrines taught in the Standards of the church, and that they are diametrically opposed to the sentiments advanced in the New Scottish Testimony, on the subjects in dispute. These communications, creditable as they were to Mr. Stott's talents, manliness, and fidelity, endeared him to honest-minded members of the church; and as they served in part to take off the mask, which the Separatists seemed anxious to wear, and to display them in their proper colours, they could not fail to excite the indignation of Dr. Paul and his brethren.

Accordingly, the Doctor replied to Mr. Stott, in three letters in the *Derry Standard*, which were, of course, struck off in a pamphlet form, and put into extensive circulation. These communications have strongly impressed upon them the prevailing characteristics of the author's style and mode of reasoning,—flippancy, perversion, occasional punning, and low allusions, evading the points in question, deducing forced consequences, boasting of his own writings, and of the distinguished character of his co-presbyters, crying out intolerance and persecution, endeavouring to hold up his opponent as the sworn enemy of peaceful Roman Catholics, &c.;—these are principal features of the letters, and were they taken away, what would remain in the shape of reasoning, would be little indeed. There are many points in these epistles which we might select for animadversion,



but neither will our space admit of lengthened remark, nor is it necessary. Our brother, Mr. Stott, needs no help from us; he has already answered many of Dr. Paul's cavils, and exposed his perversions, and he is yet well able to reply to any that remain. The Dr. may evade the question, and vapour about his own prowess, and sneer at Mr. Stott's youth, but this will not pass for conclusive argument with any that understand the question; and Dr. Paul's vituperation and appeals to prejudice, instead of injuring, will only endear his opponent to those who value the church's testimony, and who are determined steadfastly to maintain it. One or two topics in the Doctor's letters in the *Standard*, demand from us a passing notice,—not in the way of discussing the subject at issue between him and Mr. Stott, but to exhibit the position and views of the Separatists. Dr. Paul evades the whole argument of Mr. Stott, about the attacks of the Eastern Presbytery being made, not so much upon the Synod's overture, as the New Scottish Testimony, and about the notes of the doctrinal part expressing the sense of the Scottish church, on the subjects in dispute; and despite of his awkward attempts to get away from an argument which pinched him, the case just stands as Mr. Stott has stated it.—It is Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, *versus* the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland,—it is the Scottish Synod and the Scottish Testimony that are the objects of the most violent distortions and virulent attacks, contained in the *Exposure of Persecution*.\*

Again, we are informed in one of Dr. Paul's letters to Mr. Stott, that the Eastern Presbytery have adopted the New Scottish Testimony, *without the notes* appended to the doctrinal part; and it should seem they have also, since their separation, changed the Terms of Communion and the Formula, for ordination, that have been in use in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this country,

\* Mr. Stott shows clearly, that the Notes appended to the doctrinal part of the Scottish Testimony were bound in with the Testimony, the paging being continued, and reference made to them in the table of contents,—that they were judicially considered, when the other parts of the Testimony were before the Scottish Synod,—and in the nature of the case, they must be taken as expressing the judgment of the Scottish Church, on the subjects stated and illustrated in the Notes. In order to show, against Mr. Stott, that there is no absurdity in the Scotch not being pledged to the conclusiveness of the reasoning of their own Notes, Dr. Paul refers for a precedent to "one of the Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America." He forgets, however, to tell us that this is the *New-Light Synod*, who have abandoned the distinctive standing of the Covenanting Church in America. It is the same body that, in one of their public documents, only speak of "highly appreciating" the British Covenants, instead of *recognising* their perpetual obligation,—that have come to approve of the United States Government, as the moral ordinance of God,—and that have of late been proposing a union with another religious denomination (the Associate Reformed), on very latitudinarian grounds. It is not strange that such a body should advocate a lax and indefinite adherence to ecclesiastical standards. Dr. M'Master is well known as the special pleader for fraternisation of Covenanters with the United States Government. The Scottish Reformed Synod agree in no sense with the American New-Lights in their views of the manner of adherence to the church's Testimony,—they refer only to "historical details,"—and Dr. Paul knows very well that this is a different matter altogether from *doctrinal statements and arguments*. The Notes in question belong to the Doctrinal, not to the Historical part of the Testimony.

for the last *seventy* or *eighty* years, in order to have it believed that they are with the Scottish Synod in their views. As Dr. Paul mentions, at the end of this letter, that the Eastern Presbytery proposed to give to the public, "a statement of their adoption of the Scottish Standards," which has not yet appeared, we are prevented, at present, from saying much in relation to this step of the Separatists. While, the rapidity with which these alterations have been made, indicates the progress of innovation, and holds out the prospect of still more sweeping changes,\* the deception, if not treachery, with which the Scottish Testimony has been adopted by the Separatists, is deserving of particular observation. The notes on the doctrinal part of this Testimony, express the sense and deliberate judgment of the Scottish Synod on the magistrate's power, *circa sacra*,—restraint and punishment of open violations of the first table of the law,—liberty of conscience, &c. Of these notes, the Eastern Presbytery say, as Dr. Paul has quoted them, †—"The notes appended to the doctrinal part of the Scottish Testimony we regard,—as we believe they are regarded by the Scottish Church,—as bearing no farther authority than that of the reasoning contained in them, to the conclusiveness of which we are not to be considered as pledged." This is expressed with sufficient caution,—but there is a snake in the grass which is easily detected. Instead of regarding these notes as matters of indifference, the sentiments which they teach are subjects of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery's unsparing reproach, and most determined opposition, as may be seen by referring to their "Exposure of Persecution." The reasoning of the notes they style, "quite *fallacious*,"—and ambiguous,—and the principles which they inculcate, intolerant, persecuting, and almost every thing that is odious. In fact, these notes just contain the grand articles to which almost all Dr. Paul's pamphlets, speeches in Synod, and newspaper communications, have been opposed for a number of years:—they are, for substance, in perfect accordance with the sentiments taught in the *Covenanter*, *Christian Magistrate*, and *Reviewer Reviewed*, and do in reality declare the very doctrines which have called forth so much ire from Dr. Paul and his brethren against these pamphlets, and the Editors of the *Covenanter*; and they involve the principles which are made chief grounds of the Eastern Presbytery's casting off the authority of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Ireland. In the "Exposure of Persecution," these notes are charged with teaching the worst species of persecution, and with warranting universal assassination and anarchy. According to Dr. Paul's own principles and reasoning, the Scottish Synod must be persecutors, monsters of cruelty, and the veriest bigots on the face of the earth, provided they believed what they have published, and would act upon their principles. What "authority the reasoning contained" in these

\* Such an alteration in the Terms of Communion, and in the Formula, to accord with their views, which the Eastern Presbytery could not but know to be opposed to the wishes of many pious members of the church in this country, furnishes another proof that the Separatists desired no future union, or only such as they themselves will dictate.

† First Letter to the Rev. J. Stott, in the *Derry Standard*.



notes, bears with the Eastern Presbytery, it is easy to tell,—just the same, as does the Synod, against which they have rebelled, or Mr. Houston and the *Covenanters*, that they have aspersed and vilified. How they can, at the same time, talk of adopting the Scottish Standards, and of agreeing with the Scottish Synod, they can themselves best explain, and their dupes may believe them; but we have no dread that either in this country or in Scotland they will gain much credit to the allegation. The deception is too obvious, the disguise too thin to conceal their views or designs, even from persons of the smallest discernment.

Even laying aside the notes, it is quite evident that the statements of the Scottish Testimony, both in the doctrinal and historical parts, are opposed to the sentiments taught in Dr. Paul's writings, and embraced by the Eastern Presbytery. Thus, it is declared,—Scottish Testimony, doctrinal part, p. 99,—“It is his duty to see that the violation of the moral law,—in open contempt of the being of God,—in gross and public idolatry,—in open blasphemy of the name of God,—or in open profanation of the Sabbath,—as well as by injustice, licentiousness, and violence, be duly restrained, as scandalizing to religion and the church of God, as hurtful to the peace and good order of society, and as provoking the displeasure and rebukes of the Almighty against the nation.” In p. 104 of the same part, the Scottish Synod testifies against the sentiment as an error, “that the repression of gross outward public acts of idolatry or blasphemy, is persecution;” and in the historical part, p. 108, they set aside the plea of liberty of conscience, advanced to exempt persons of erroneous sentiments from restraint and correction, and say,—“Who will deny that there are opinions and practices so contrary to the light of nature, and the known principles of Christianity, and so injurious to society, as fully to warrant magistratical coercion and punishment?” We leave it to any unprejudiced person, whether these statements are not plainly opposed to the avowed sentiments of Dr. Paul, while they are entirely consistent with the notes on the doctrinal part of the Testimony, and with all that former authorised writings of the church teach, upon the subject of magistratical coercion.

We are aware that the Eastern Separatists would persuade us, that their views are not opposed to those of the Scottish Testimony, when it teaches the duty of magistrates to repress gross and public idolatry. They explain “gross and public idolatry,” to mean “such idolatry as the worship of Juggernaut, or the public processions through the streets of cities, where all are compelled to worship the host,” and admit that in such cases it should be restrained. We only remark, at present, that, as Mr. Stott has well shewn, the statement of the Eastern Presbytery is merely tantamount to declaring, that murder, injury to men's persons, &c., should be punished,—but that it by no means amounts to the declaration in the Scottish Testimony. In plain terms, the presbytery would have the magistrate to punish the breach of the sixth commandment, but not that of the second; they would have him to restrain idolatry, merely when attended with violence to men's bodies, or murder, and that under the notion, *merely*, of

crimes "hurtful to the peace and good order of society." But the Scottish Synod declare it should be restrained as idolatry, for they mention other breaches of the moral law, as objects of magistral restraint, such as "injustice, licentiousness, and violence,"—and they say it should be restrained as "scandalizing to religion and the church of God;" and as "provoking the displeasure and rebukes of the Almighty against the nation," as well as "hurtful" to society. It is, therefore, completely apparent, that, notwithstanding the Presbytery's explanation, they are still on Dr. Paul's ground, and utterly deny the duty of civil rulers, in a reformed land, to repress gross and open idolatry, *as such*, and also plead, as he does, for "legal protection and favour" being extended to "the mysteries of paganism, the rites of Mahomet, and the idolatry of Antichrist;" and that they are herein utterly opposed to the Scottish Synod, who not only declare that "gross and public idolatry" should be restrained, but that "*opinions*" "contrary to the light of nature, and the known principles of Christianity," are a proper object of "magistral coercion and punishment." The deceitfulness of such a method of dealing with the Standards of the church, need not be pointed out. The Eastern Separatists can agree with the Scottish Testimony, and disagree with it at the same time,—they can adopt it, and virulently assail it,—they can charge upon it every thing abominable and revolting, while, forsooth, they "have not departed" from it, and are "willing to be tried" by it! The church in this country and in Scotland will form their estimate of such professions, and will recognise in them the policy of those who embrace novelties in religion, and become schismatics in the church.\*

We may only remark farther, respecting these letters, that Dr. Paul tries, as he has vainly tried a hundred times before, to shew that his new-light doctrines are consistent with the Standards of the church, by referring to the "Causes of Fasting" for 1823, which he always represents as the Synod's Causes, and to the "Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion," and to the "Short Account of Old Dissenters." These, it will be remembered, are the only documents which he has adduced, when repeatedly called upon to shew the consistency of his sentiments with the Standards of the church. Surely if the Dr.'s system be, as he would have us believe, in accordance with the testimony of the church, he might have found in our approved writings, somewhat more than two or three passages to yield him the shadow of support, in opposing hundreds which pointedly condemn his sen-

\* Dr. Paul, in one of his letters to Mr. Stott, finds no difficulty in forging an expression, that he may expose the excellent Samuel Rutherford and Mr. Houston, to odium and indignation. He says,—"The Rev. Samuel Rutherford and the Rev. Thomas Houston were not mitred, and yet they could tell what punishment should be inflicted,—*The very same punishments that were inflicted under the former economy.*" Now, this last clause, given in inverted commas, as a quotation, and in italics, to produce effect, is neither an expression of Mr. Rutherford's nor of Mr. Houston's,—it is something worse than a pious fraud—it is a malevolent forgery of Dr. John Paul, of Carrickfergus, who knew, at the time, that Mr. Houston had frequently protested against the sentiment which he has ascribed to him.



timents. These few irrelevant expressions, he, in fact, brings forward, in opposition to all the authorised documents and approved writings of the church, from the days of the First Reformation till the present time, which plainly teach a doctrine that he denies and opposes.

As however he clings to the statements of the "Causes," as his miserable sheet-anchor, we may observe, that if the "Explanation and Defence," and "Causes of Fasting" are to be taken, according to the construction which he puts upon them, then we would have no hesitation in saying, that they surrender a great principle, clearly taught in the church's standards, and as little in saying, that we reject at once their *explanation*, and cleave to the standards. The vows of ministers at their ordination, and of persons on entering the membership of the church, bind them to an explicit approval of the standards, but make no mention of occasional explanations,—and clearly they cannot bind to statements or reasoning which explain away or deny any thing taught in these writings, for this were to impose a self-contradictory vow. The "Causes" of 1823, were, we believe, prepared and published by a committee, and not by the Synod; \* and if they bear Dr. Paul's construction, and deny and oppose the doctrine of magistratical coercion, then that portion of them on which he relies, was the result of inadvertence or treachery; and even had the Synod expressly sanctioned them, as we believe they never did, the church could not be bound by them, for the Supreme Judicatory would then have renounced a great article contained in the standards which they had solemnly vowed to maintain. Understood in their proper sense, the expressions of the "Causes" teach nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of magistratical coercion. They take off an offensive meaning ascribed by enemies to the word *extirpate*, as employed in our Covenants, and in this we agree with them. They vindicate the church against the allegation, that men are to be converted from their errors by physical force, and we utterly reject such a sentiment. But if the expressions are to be stretched out to oppose the doctrine of magistratical restraint of gross and public idolatry, heresy, and blasphemy,—then we say again, that the men who foisted in such a statement were either overseen in this instance, or acted a disingenuous and treacherous part. The Reformed Synod assuredly never adopted, knowingly, the views of a modern Independent, on the subject of the Christian magistrate's guardianship of both tables of the Divine law. The expressions from the "Explanation and Defence," and from the "Short Account of Old Dissenters," require no farther comment than we have elsewhere given.† They declare, as we have always maintained, that error in the mind is not a proper object of magistratical coercion,—that men may *hold their opinions* without restraint,—and that it is only when they propagate gross error or idolatry, so as to do injury to society, that even in a refor-

\* Dr. Paul stated in Synod, that the writer of these "Causes," was the *Rev. John Alexander*, and if we are rightly informed, there was at least another of the Separatists, a member of the committee, that prepared them.

† "Reviewer Reviewed," pp. 14, 15.

med state, they should be restrained or punished. That this is in nothing opposed to the views held forth in the standards of the church, and in the *Covenanter, Christian Magistrate, &c.*, on the subject of the magistrate's coercive power, while it affords no countenance to Dr. Paul's views, must be apparent to any person who properly understands the question.

Having thus noticed the principal public proceedings and writings of the Separatists, since their withdrawal from Synod, it remains that, according to promise, we meet the challenge of the subscribers of the *Declinature*, and show, by a brief contrast, the opposition of Dr. Paul's published sentiments to the "Church's Testimony,"—only premising, that we consider the Separatists justly identified with his writings, since the *Declinature* and other papers published by them, are just the essence of his pamphlets, libels, memorials, &c., and that, on a future occasion, we may extend this contrast, and add some comments, for which we have not room in the present publication.

#### DR. PAUL'S SENTIMENTS.

"Sins striking against God, and not so immediately affecting the interests of society, are not *less* now than under the law; they are *greater*. Our light being greater, these sins are more aggravated. They are not, however, to be treated in the same manner. As God himself does not treat them in the same manner, neither should *we*. As he has changed *his* plan of discipline, we should change *ours* also."—*Covenanter Reviewed*, page 45.

"We foolishly imagine that error, heresy, and idolatry, are not so sinful *now* as they were under the legal dispensation,—because they are not punished by such awful visitations. The very reverse, however, is the fact. They are much *more* sinful. Their criminality is certainly much enhanced by the immense superiority of our light and privileges. Accordingly, we find that the punishment then threatened, was *temporal*; but that which is *now* threatened, is *eternal*."—*Ibid*, page 45, 46.

"Some flagrant violators of the moral law of God are in this life visited with *terrible punishments*,—some are punished, *but not so severely*,—whilst others are *scarcely punished at all*."—*Ibid*, page 54.

"Under the legal dispensation, God said to the idolater, 'I will punish you with temporal death; I will cut you off by the sword of the civil magistrate.' Under the Gospel dispensation, he says, 'I will punish you with *ETERNAL* death.'"—*Ibid*, page 56.

"With an infallible Judge to direct them, they might try cases of heresy and idolatry, which, without such a Counsellor, it would be the highest presumption in us to try. God himself was then their king, and, therefore, idolatry and sin, committed immediately against himself, was punished as high treason. But this is no precedent for us now, who have no infallible king, and have no opportunity of obtaining an infallible decision."—*Review of Christian Magistrate*, page 73.

"Away, then, with the weak and ill-founded idea, that the punishment of heresy and idolatry would have any tendency to eradicate these evils,—that it would operate as an example to deter others,—or that it would produce *any one beneficial effect*."—*Ibid*, page 83.

"Though an old Catholic writer, Peter Dens, maintains, that because heresy and idolatry were punished by the civil magistrate under the Jewish dispensation, they ought to be so punished still; Catholics are now ashamed of such persecuting principles. They deny and abjure them. The long period they spent in the school of persecution, has taught them, we trust, some useful lessons. The position in which they at present stand, fighting the battles of civil and religious liberty, is certainly well calculated to eradicate persecuting principles, and to inoculate them with the principles of liberty and charity."—*Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving*, by the Eastern Presbytery, pages 30, 31.



"Dr. Paul concluded by moving, that, after the words, 'holding different opinions,' in the report, the words, 'or avowing and defending them,' be inserted."\* —*Report of Discussions on the Magistrate's Power circa sacra, in the Synod in Ballymena, in 1838, p. 41.*

The reader will please to compare with the above the following statements from

#### THE STANDARDS OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate."—*Westminster Confession*, chap. xx, art. 4.

"It may also be here remarked, as an undoubted evidence of the corruptness of the state, that although there are civil laws presently in being, which declare the maintaining of Antitrinitarian, Atheistical principles, to be not only criminal but capital; yet the civil powers in the nation have not so much regard to God, and the Son of God, as to punish treason openly acted against them."—*Act, Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 90.

"And therefore, that all who vent or maintain tenets or opinions contrary to the established principles of Christianity, whether in the matter of doctrine, divine worship, or practice in life, which are contrary to, and inconsistent with, the analogy of faith, and the power of true godliness, or destructive of that pure peace and good order established by Christ in his church, are accountable unto the church; and, upon proper conviction, ought to be proceeded against, by inflicting ecclesiastical censures or civil pains, in a way agreeable unto the Divine determination in the word concerning such offences."—*Ibid*, page 160.

"And who will deny that there are opinions and practices so contrary to the light of nature, and the known principles of Christianity, and so injurious to society, as fully to warrant magistratical coercion and punishment?"†—*New Scottish Testimony*,—Historical part, page 108.

Again, the Eastern Presbytery write thus:—

"With those Covenanters who think that the civil magistrate should punish heretics and idolaters, we would have borne for some time, but they would not bear with us."—*Declination*, page 18.

"They (the sentiments of the *Declaration*) are extremely exceptionable:—they involve,—so far as we can understand them,—the entire system of persecution. Let us come to particulars. 'Nor is he (the magistrate) under less obligation to withhold legal protection, and all favour whatsoever, from the mysteries of Paganism, the rites of Mahomet, the idolatry of Antichrist, and every other system of false worship.'"

\* In reference to the merits of this controversy, it deserves and will secure perpetual remembrance, that in this motion the liberal and tolerant Dr. Paul would allow no limitation or restriction upon the right of any man to "avow and defend" his sentiments, however noxious, save and except those that have been avowed and defended by the Rev. Thomas Houston, whose works on the subject of Magistracy he would consign to the flames, and of course along with them the writings of Knox, Rutherford, Gillespie, Durham, Renwick, the Westminster Divines, and all others that teach the coercion and punishment of gross heresy and idolatry.

† This cannot be regarded as a simple interrogation, as the Scottish Synod must be aware that thousands in the present day deny that grossly erroneous opinions, and idolatrous practices, should be coerced and punished; and they could not have been ignorant of the existence of some of Dr. Paul's late pamphlets, which contain not only the denial of this sentiment, but the most violent denunciation of it. We are exceedingly happy to find our Scottish brethren adopting this form of expression, in order to give a most emphatical condemnation of a spurious liberality.

"The statement on which we are animadverting would not only lead to public massacres, but to private assassinations."

"From the observations made, it must be quite apparent that the Declaration would destroy all civil and commercial intercourse."

*Exposure of Persecution*, pages 2, 3, 4.

Now let us hear the Scottish Reformed Synod on this very point:

"And while we consider that legal protection ought to be given to the religion of Christ, we cannot plead the same for the mysteries of Paganism,—the rites of Mohammed,—or the idolatry of Antichrist. And in contending for the principle upon which we make these exceptions, we cannot think that we expose ourselves to the charge of intolerance and persecution."—*New Scottish Testimony*, page 163.

Again, the Eastern Presbytery say:—

"The Declaration asserts that a Christian nation is bound to embody in its constitution the laws of God on both tables."

"And yet on this very basis the Declaration endeavours to erect the whole fabric of persecution."

*Exposure of Persecution*, page 5.

The Scottish Testimony declares:—

"When civil society has, by its own consent, embodied in its constitution the laws of God in the first table, as it is under obligation to do, as well as those in the second, it is inconsistent with the subjection of conscience to the Divine law, as well as with the principles on which society is formed, to plead for a right to violate these laws."—*New Scottish Testimony*, page 156.

The Eastern Presbytery add:—

"The Declaration assures us, 'that the civil restraint of those that, in propagating their erroneous sentiments, openly transgress the law of God, and the laws of society founded upon it, is not intolerance.' And again,—'Authoritative restraint of the open violation of the first, second, or any other commandment of God is not persecution; for as no man has a right to violate the Divine law, no right is invaded.' And again,—'It is no more a man's right to worship an idol than to kill or to steal.' This reasoning, though extremely plausible, is quite fallacious. It proves too much, and therefore proves nothing to the purpose. It proves the very thing it was designed to refute,—the charge of persecution. It leads to the very same frightful consequences which we have been just now exposing."—*Exposure of Persecution*, page 9.

"Nay farther, on the principle laid down, the propagation of religion by the sword might be justified.—The Covenanting civil magistrate might go forth with the Bible in the one hand, and the sword in the other."

"It opens a frightful door for intolerance and persecution."

"The Declaration goes on to say,—'And there can be no valid objection to the judge, who is, first, the Divine Lawgiver himself, secondly, the nation recognising his law, and embodying it in the civil constitution, and empowering the representatives to carry it into effect.' To this statement we strongly object. To us it appears quite fallacious. All persecution is founded on that sophism which takes for granted the point in dispute."

"If it be said, idolaters were punished under the law,—were those who punished them both party and judges? We answer, No. God was judge. He sat between the cherubims and decided difficult cases. It is otherwise now; and therefore we must appeal to the judgment of the great day."—*Exposure of Persecution*, pp. 9, 10, 12, 14.

Compare with this the declarations of the Scottish Synod:—

"A right in opposition to his own law, God does not, cannot give; nor is it competent to any power to impart and sanction such a right. It is no more the right of a man to worship an idol, or to blaspheme the name of God, than to kill or to steal, though he may judge it proper to do all of them."—*New Scottish Testimony*, p. 156.

"It is objected against all magistratical interference in any thing connected with the first table of the law that it is persecution. But the restraint of an open and gross immorality is not persecution. In this restraint no right is invaded."



"The question of persecution resolves itself into another respecting the rights of man; and this brings us to the law of God, the standard of these rights. And as no man has a right to violate the law of God, the restraint of an open violation invades no right, is no persecution." "But it is asked, Who is judge? This question may be answered by another: Who is judge in ecclesiastical law? Who is judge in the case of the breaches of the second table of the law? If there is a competence to judge and act in the one case, why not in the other? Is the law of God that unintelligible, ambiguous, and convertible thing, that no definite meaning can be assigned to it? The Judge is, first, God himself, the great Lawgiver; and secondly, it is the nation recognising the Divine law, embodying it in their constitution, and empowering their representatives to carry it into effect."—*Ibid*, pp. 157, 158.

"We speak here of man, not in the retirements of his chamber, where no human eye seeth him, but as a member of society, and visibly exerting an influence upon it. And in this view, few will assent to the above sentiment, (that it is the common right of all men to worship God in the way they think proper) without excepting from the liberty granted, principles and practices hurtful to society, or subversive of it. We go a little farther, and except from the above liberty, principles obviously in opposition to the moral law, and subversive of the moral government of God. Principles of this kind are hurtful to society: but this consideration, though necessarily connected with the subject, and important, is not to take the precedence of that honour which is due to God."—*Ibid*, p. 159.

"Nor in this matter are we to confound the just restraint of an obstinate and contemptuous blasphemer of religion, of God, and of every thing sacred, and the exclusion of men of bad principles from places of power, with allowing them to enjoy the protection of those rights which are common to men, while they do not, in the propagation of their principles, offend openly against the laws of God, and of society, and thus threaten the subversion of the one and of the other."—*Ibid*, p. 161.

We have thus exhibited a contrast between the sentiments contained in the writings of Dr. Paul and the Eastern Presbytery, and the doctrines of the Standards of the church. We might easily have extended it to other points, but the quotations which we have given may suffice to meet the "challenge" in the close of the *Declination*. Compelled to take up the gauntlet, we have only to let the extracts speak for themselves; and we have no doubt that they will prove, to the entire conviction of every unprejudiced reader, that the Eastern Separatists have "relinquished" more than a "single principle of the church's testimony," and that we are no "calumniators" when we have alleged, that, in withdrawing from the Synod, they have withdrawn "from the Reformed Presbyterian Church,"—they have abandoned her principles, and placed themselves in the attitude of her determined enemies.

#### CONCLUSION.

In the necessary defence of principle and character, we have performed what we entered upon with reluctance. We have traced the progress of innovation and error, till they have issued in schism and separation, and originated another of the numerous sects which unhappily divide the church. In exhibiting the progressive steps of those who have relinquished the authority of the Reformed Synod, and withdrawn from the church, we have had frequent occasion to notice the spirit by which they were actuated, the aid which they furnished to the declared enemies of the church, to vilify her principles and reproach her ministers and people; and, above all, the contrariety of the published sentiments of the separating brethren, to the church's testimonies of an earlier and

later date. This opposition has been so mournfully apparent in so many instances, that none can doubt it who are not blinded by party spirit, or have not been brought to regard with favour the relinquishment of a Covenanted profession. If we add to this, the avidity with which Dr. Paul and his friends have, all along, seized every opportunity that presented itself, to reproach the venerable reformers and fathers of the church, and their embittered hostility towards their brethren; labouring to draw upon them the hatred of the whole community, representing them as men of hateful sentiments, we have the melancholy picture completed, and the new party stands forth as having forsaken the footsteps of the flock, opposed in principle and alien in spirit to the church of our fathers.

The subject of this pamphlet suggests many solemn subjects of reflexion. Another division of the church has taken place,—and this effected by the declension of ministers of long standing, and of acknowledged abilities! The leaders of the people have caused them to err. Defection from scriptural profession, and schism in the church are evils of great magnitude, and, in whatever sources they originate, they are much to be deplored. It is fearful to consider the breach of solemn vows, which they involve, and the melancholy consequences by which they are followed. The Lord hateth putting away,—and the course of backsliding has generally been marked by tokens of divine disapprobation, even in this world. An increasing departure from principle; the decline of practical piety in individuals and families; and a gradual merging into connexions ecclesiastical or political, that are far from a scriptural standard, are among the baleful fruits that spring from the surrender of a faithful testimony. Men, goaded on by passion or prejudice, concealed hatred to the truth, or the love of sin, choose their delusions,—and God generally gives them up to strong delusion. Deceiving others, they are themselves deceived; and galled by the faithful exhibition of truth, or mortified that they cannot prevail against those who hold fast their profession, their spirit becomes more and more rancorous, while they still continue to profess respect for sound principle, and to declare that they are actuated by the desire of peace. They “bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.”

In the view of such evils, the Lord’s voice loudly calls to Covenanted witnesses, to “Hold fast that which they have, that no man take their crown.” Under the standard of our fathers’ testimony, we are safe amidst trials within the church, and exposed to the greatest conflicts from without. In keeping the word of Christ’s patience, the Faithful and True Witness has guaranteed that we shall be kept in the hour of temptation, that is coming upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth. He who was with our fathers, by his Spirit to guide them in difficulty and to sanctify and comfort them, and by his power to sustain them and render them triumphant in suffering; will be present with all who walk by the footsteps of the flock, to hide them from the strife of tongues, to support them in the evil day, and to own and bless their labours. What would it avail us to abandon the testimony



of Jesus? The favour and applause of the erroneous and irreligious are but a poor recompense for the sacrifice of a good conscience; and nothing on earth can furnish a solid ground of peace and comfort, if we incur the displeasure of Him whose name is Jealous,—of Him who, while he walketh amidst the golden candlesticks, has his eyes like a flame of fire.

To ministers and office-bearers in the church, the transactions which we have recorded, speak in the language of solemn admonition. Let us be watchful against those evils that have seduced others into courses of backsliding. We should beware of association with those who undervalue the testimony of Jesus, or of confederating with the political parties of the day. Let us avoid a divisive, self-seeking spirit,—cultivate personal piety, give ourselves wholly to the work to which we have been appointed, and labour together in prayer, that the Lord would pour out his Spirit upon a faithful remnant, and repair the desolations of Zion. And in a trying and shaking time, discarding all considerations of our own ease, reputation, and worldly interest, we should keep ever before us the solemn command and gracious assurance of our exalted Lord,—“Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

The members of the church too should improve these trials, by abounding in all holy duties. By the defection of standard-bearers, and persons of long standing, they are taught that there is no confidence to be placed in man. Let them trust in the name of the Lord,—let them go to the mercy-seat, and live near it; and when enemies belie their principles, and cast out their names as evil; let them, as did their illustrious forefathers, aim to be blameless, and without rebuke amidst a crooked and perverse generation,—shining as lights in the world, and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. To any candid, and well-minded persons, who still value a Covenanted Testimony, though they have been deluded by the representations of those, who have abandoned the testimony of the church, or have in their simplicity followed them, we would say,—give the statements which we have submitted an unprejudiced consideration. Weigh the matters which they present, in the light of your solemn vows, and of your duty to the present and to future generations. The history of all past defections warrants us to say, that a few years will disclose the evil tendency of the principles and measures of those who have aeceded from the testimony of our fathers, and will put them to shame. Let those who have, for a season been under deception, speedily retrace the steps into which they were unconsciously led,—and, displaying again a faithful standard for truth, let them seek, by walking in the footsteps of the flock, the protection and refreshment administered by the Shepherd of Israel.

There is no ground of discouragement to right-hearted men from these trials. Division is not unfrequently the result of awakening times in the church,—of the revival of sound principle, and of holy practice. Evils that had lain long concealed, are at such a season brought to light,—and persons who disrelish the testimony, and have no heart to spiritual efforts, are driven away. However unpleasant and trying a winnowing process may be in

the church, our comfort is, that the fan is in the Redeemer's hand, that in love and mercy he purges the floor, and that the trial must ultimately contribute to the strength and beauty, the stability and fruitfulness of Zion. While lamenting the evil effects of discord and division in the church, and preparing for future trials, let us admire the doings of Him who is excellent in council and wonderful in working. Let us wait on the Lord, who hideth himself from the house of Jacob: and however men may vilify and reproach, let us rest assured that the Lord will, in due time, arise and plead his own cause, and hasten on the era of Zion's joyful and glorious deliverance. *"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."*

END.



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